THE LIBERTARIAN REVIEW

May 1981
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THE TWO-FACED BUDGET

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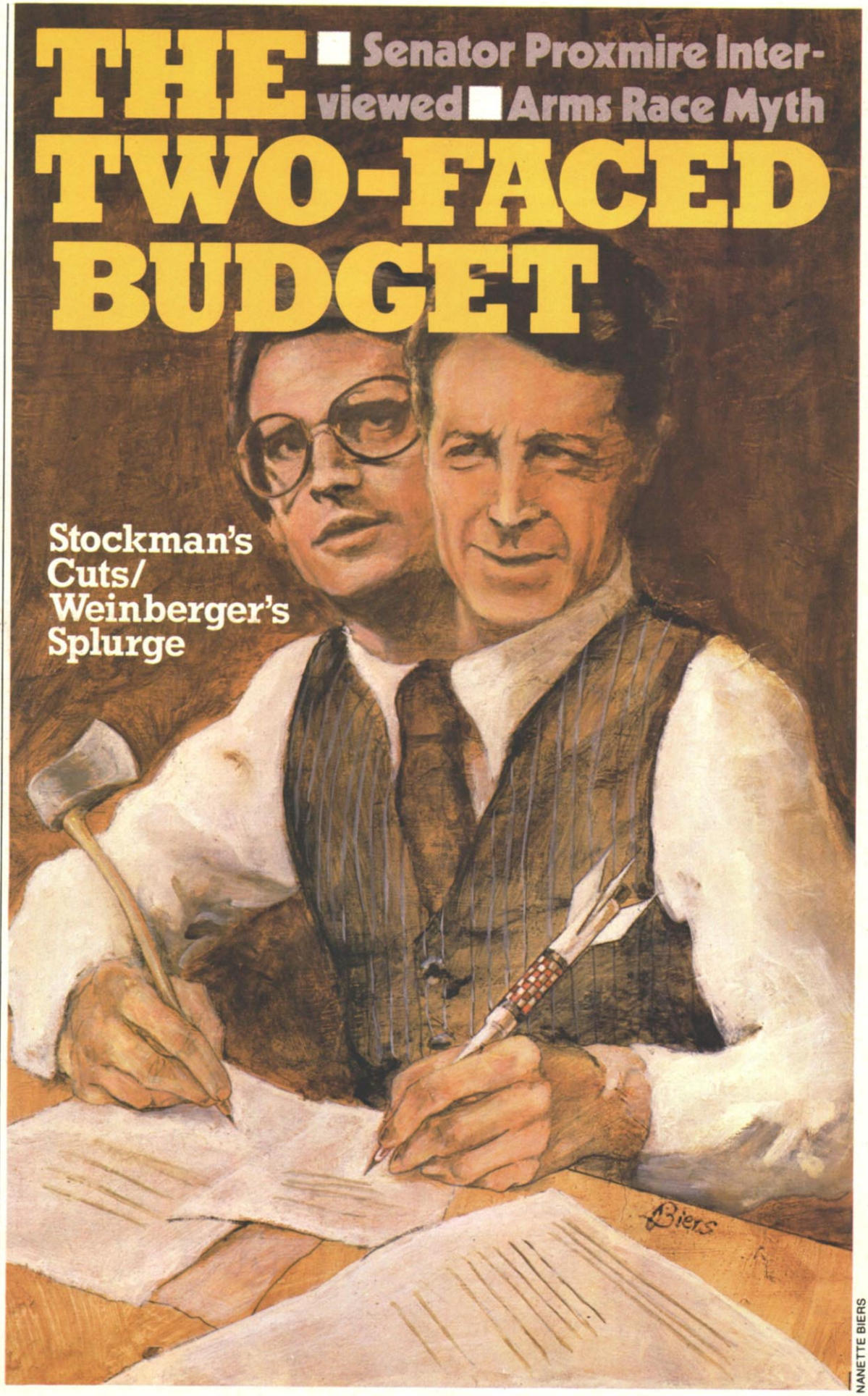

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THE LIBERTARIAN REVIEW

May 1981
Volume 10, No. 5

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EDITORIALS

COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

Black despair

IN COMMUNITIES ALL over the country, the ribbons are flying, tied to car aerials, hanging on doorknobs, pinned to lapels. Green, red, or black. The idea was suggested by a woman in Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia City Council promptly passed a resolution calling on all Americans to wear a green ribbon to express solidarity with the families in Atlanta whose children have been murdered. Green, to symbolize life. Since then, the idea has caught on everywhere, seemingly spontaneously, especially in black neighborhoods. But in many places, the ribbons are not green for life, they are red, for blood. And the black ones? Black is for despair.

Poor black neighborhoods are places of despair. Herded into crime-ridden public schools and crime-ridden public housing projects, untrained by public education, with economic opportunities further limited by minimum-wage laws and licensing laws (as economist Walter Williams has shown), receiving inadequate government "services" like garbage collection and police and fire protection, the people who live in these areas see little of our society except unemployment and welfare bureaucrats, and criminals. They watch politicians, black or white, talking about our free enterprise system on television — and conclude that if "free enterprise" means spending your life being told what to do by one government employee after another, they don't think much of it. They know that poor blacks die younger, are raped more often, are robbed more often, and are shot by the police more often than the more affluent whites that live in other sections of the city. They also know that attempts at self-defense or anti-crime patrols, in poor neighborhoods (but not in expensive ones), will be stopped immediately by the police. Politicians and the police, black or white, don't like poor black folks, they conclude again.

America's contemporary cities are disfigured by a government blight that withers everything it touches. Housing projects, perhaps, symbolize best the essence of this blight. Housing projects, which Jane Jacobs pointed out in her great account of the spontaneous order that makes cities function properly and safely, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, "become worse centers of delinquency, vandalism and general social hopelessness than the slums they were supposed to replace." This happens, she explains, because the planners sweep away all of the old buildings in a neighborhood and,

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BRYCE FLYNN/PICTURE GROUP

Jeffrey Mathes' mother at the funeral held for him in February. The Mathes family lived in a housing project.

with them, all of the small stores and hangouts that kept "eyes on the street," replacing them with high blank walls or open spaces that foster anonymity. People lose the coffee counters and candy stores and neighborhood bars and Mom-and-Pop grocery stores where they can learn something about their neighbors — who belongs, who is okay — in an impersonal way, without relinquishing any of their privacy. And the open yet secluded spaces in a housing project are accessible to strangers and at the same time unobserved — an invitation to crime.

This has happened in Atlanta. Georgia State Senator Julian Bond has called public *housing projects "fortresses,* with their backs to the world, inward-looking, cold, impersonal and inhuman." Public housing has replaced many of the older poor neighborhoods of Atlanta and, noted an Emory University sociologist to *New York Times* reporter Wendell Rawls, Jr., small shops and businesses have vanished in most of the poorer sections of the city. Rawls went on to report the astounding fact that *all 20* of the children murdered during the first 19 months of the killings "lived in public housing projects or similar low-income units."

And Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, himself black, remarked in an interview earlier this year, "The sense of neighborhood that used to be is not as pronounced as it once was. What you had in a neighborhood *before was a feeling* that no matter whose child you were, if you were walking down the street going to school and if you didn't act right, somebody would get on you, say that they were going to call your mama and daddy and in fact did so.... Segregation, for all its evils—I'm not defending it, but this is one of its factual historical byproducts — drew black people together." But, of course, it is not the absence of legal segregation that has destroyed the neighborhoods; that destruction is the result of government policy and planning. Atlanta's housing projects are still 99 percent black, but that fact alone doesn't draw people together. It is the desire of planners to remove people from the streets that destroys neighborhoods and makes them unsafe and children unsupervised.

Jane Jacobs describes two sides of a wide street in East Harlem, with no differences of race or income. The difference was that on one side, there was a housing project. "On the old-city side, which was full of public places and the sidewalk loitering so deplored by Utopian minders of other people's leisure, the children were being kept well in hand. On the project side of the streeet across the way, the children, who had a fire hydrant open beside their play area, were playing destructively, drenching the open windows of houses with water, squirting it on adults who ignorantly walked on the project side of the street, throwing it into the windows of cars as they went by. Nobody dared to stop them. These were anonymous children, and the identities behind them were an unknown. What if you scolded or stopped them? Who would back you up over there in the blind-eyed Turf?" Atlanta is now blind-eyed, too.

In simpler, less urbanized societies, children are in a very real way the wealth of the poor. They can help raise and gather food, and will care for you when you are too old to do it yourself. In the modern welfare city, children are often the wealth of the poor in a more symbolic way — they are community in a fragmented society; they are the only hope for something better in life. The outstanding tragedy of the death of the children in Atlanta *is that they were* the hope of the future. As a group, they were, as a spokesman for Mayor Jackson said, "out there hustling in the good sense of the word." Lee P. Brown, the Public Safety Commissioner, said, "most were considered enterprising youngsters, constantly looking for an errand to run, a floor to sweep, a grocery bag to carry or other jobs to make some money." One was exceptional in mathematics, and in a school program for gifted children. Another wanted to be an artist. But they were street children, on streets which public policy had rendered bitterly unsafe.

Like the politicians and the bureaucrats and the police who deal with poor blacks in Atlanta, the killer (or killers) is so probably either black or white; as I write this, no one yet knows. But, as with the politicians and the bureaucrats and the police, whichever way it turns out won't change the fact that the many blacks who see the murders — and their being unsolved for so long—as racist are, in a certain sense, right. It *is* racist to descend on poor black neighborhoods with the full force of government, destroy small businesses, and leave the inhabitants "pushed about, expropriated, and uprooted much as if they were the subjects of a conquering power," to use Jane Jacobs's words. And all to produce the world of Atlanta's public housing — a world in which the young and intelligent and ambitious can be murdered with impunity, because the eyes have been banished from the streets. Wear a ribbon to remind yourself: green, red... or black.

—JKT

Bigotry and tolerance

IN RECENT MONTHS, WE have seen an escalation in the battle between the New Right born-again fundamentalists and Moral Majority-types on the one hand, and assorted liberals and secular humanists on the other. In the 1980 elections, the New Right targeted several liberal Senators and defeated them soundly, replacing them with a flock of new conservative legislators. That struck fear into the hearts of liberals, who quickly began organizing

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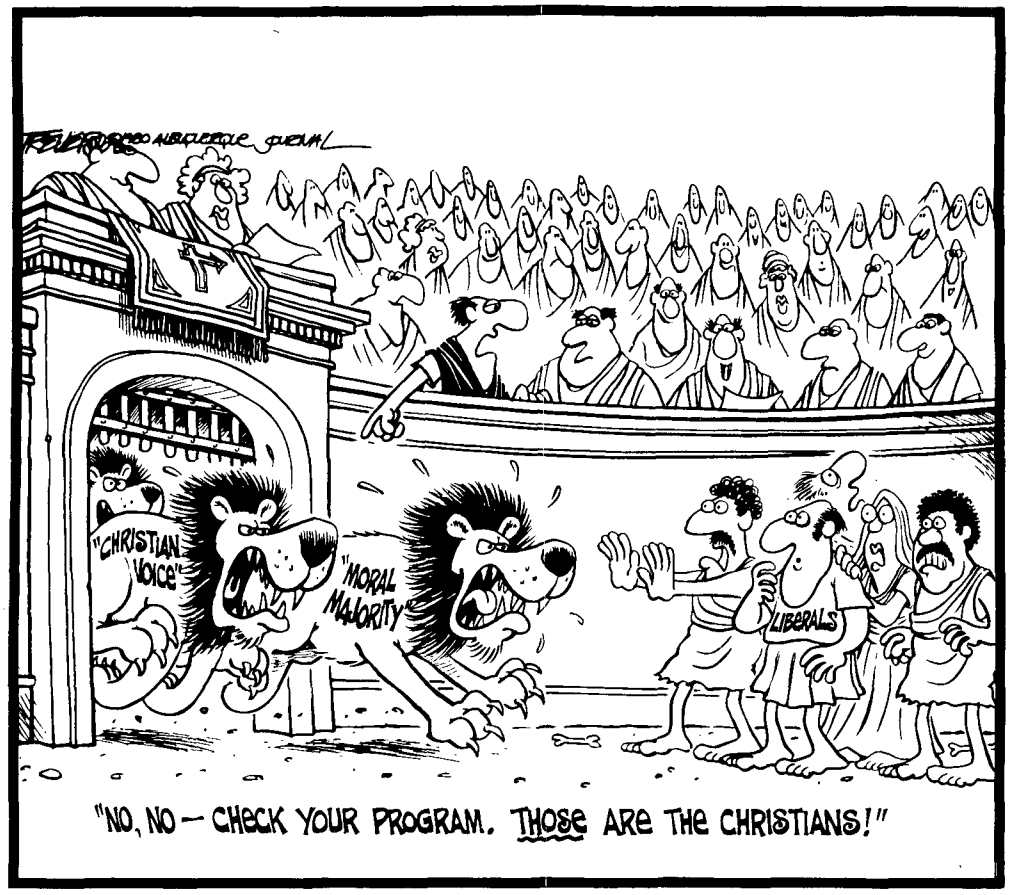

"NO, NO — CHECK YOUR PROGRAM. THOSE ARE THE CHRISTIANS!"

for a comeback. Former Senator George McGovern announced the formation of a group to fight the New Right. Norman Lear, television producer responsible for a host of shows repugnant to the Moral Majority, started Citizens for the American Way to oppose what he saw as a resurgence of bigotry coming from the general direction of Jerry Falwell. And the ACLU has launched a series of full page ads in newspapers attacking the Moral Majority by name, pleading for financial support to do combat with the forces of darkness.

Jerry Falwell responded with some full page ads of his own, denouncing what he saw as ACLU's lies about the Moral Majority, and defending what he represents as his organization's basic views. The latest in a series ran recently in *The New York Times* and other places, and it proclaimed, "They have labeled Moral Majority the Extreme Right because we speak out against Extreme Wrong!" in a bellowing headline. Falwell took the opportunity to set the record straight on the Moral Majority: it was indeed anti-pornography, but it was opposed to censorship; it was against abortion, and intended to outlaw it; it wanted to stamp out the drug menace; and it wanted to bring fundamentalist religious values back to center stage in American society. Falwell took great pains to deny that the Moral Majority was bigoted, painting his group instead as beleaguered, villified, and woefully misunderstood, the target of a vicious smear campaign by "pornographers, amoral secular humanists, and abortionists," who use full page ads to "raise funds for themselves" by "employing McCarthy-like fear tactics."

Both sides have used hyperbole aplenty in their newspaper-ad war, each screaming about the threat posed by the other. The ACLU used the Moral Majority as a symbol of everything wicked in the American right, and took several liberties with the actual positions of Moral Majority, Inc. That is to be deplored. But so too is Falwell's own attempt to fudge the truth about MM. Take the issue of bigotry.

Is Moral Majority anti-semitic, for example, or opposed to full rights for gay people? Not in the least, the Reverend claims. First, the MM is firmly pro-Israel; indeed, "one cannot belong to Moral Majority without making the commitment to support the state of Israel." And, Falwell claims in bold type, "No anti-semitic influence is allowed in Moral Majority." And gays? Well, "while we believe that homosexuality is moral perversion, we are committed to guaranteeing the civil rights of homosexuals," so long, of course, as they don't "flaunt their perversion as an acceptable lifestyle...." Clearly, then, all this scaremongering by radicals and humanists is so much bilge.

The matter, however, is not so simple as that. When Moral Majority opened its first group in Brooklyn, New York, the Rev. Dan C. Forte, head of the New York MM, said a few interesting things to the press. Intolerant of Jews? he was asked. Not at all: "I love the Jewish people deeply. God has given them talents he has not given to others. They are his chosen people. Jews have a God-given ability to make money, almost a supernatural ability to make money. They control the media, they control this city." Falwell shrugged this off as a little harmless stereotyping, but we can understand why some of Rev. Forte's beloved Jewish residents of Brooklyn got a little nervous.

And while Moral Majority claims it favors full civil rights for gays, it has an odd way of expressing it sometimes. A little piece in *The New York Times*, nearly invisible to the naked eye, reported this:

> Calling San Francisco the "Sodom and Gomorrah" of the nation, a coalition of fundamentalist groups has announced that it intends to spend $3 million on a media campaign attacking homosexuals.
>
> The coalition said that it would buy advertisements in an attempt to build anti-homosexual feelings in the community and to persuade homosexuals to give up their lifestyle.
>
> "I agree with capital punishment, and I believe homosexuality is one of those that could be coupled with murder and other sins," said Dean Wycoff, a spokesman for the Santa Clara Moral Majority, one of the groups involved in the campaign. [February 11, 1981]

Mr. Wycoff went on to call San Francisco, until recently a uniquely tolerant city, "the armpit of this perverted movement." The Rev. Falwell then muttered something about tightening local MM standards.

Granted, the Moral Majority-types have about as much chance of wiping out homosexuality in San Francisco through an advertising campaign as they would have of reparting the Red Sea. But would a man who seriously advocates capital punishment for gays be satisified merely with expressing his point of view in paid advertising?

That's the truly ominous shadow lurking behind the Moral Majority and, for that matter, any group which blurs the distinction between the peaceful exercise of free speech and the use of government force to turn its opinions into law. The Moral Majority already wants to do that with respect to abortion and drugs, and the suspicion is that it won't stop there. But let's look at both sides of the coin here.

The fact is that the Moral Majority-types are right in one sense: liberals and secular humanists *have* used government to enforce some of their own views. All sorts of government programs, from welfare to busing to sex education, amount to little more than the enforcement of a secular reli-

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gion, or propaganda for favored views. And there can be no doubt that government schools have been a primary vehicle by which these people have attempted to brainwash American children. The problem here is neither the values of the fundamentalists who would like to recapture control of the education system nor the values of the liberals or "secular humanists" who want to exclude what they see as religious dogma from the curriculum of public schools. The problem is with the enforcement of *either* group's values, and with the public school system *per se*. The public school system, after all, is a coercive mechanism by which certain opinions are crammed down the throats of young people, paid for by taxpayers. Those opinions, no matter what they are, obtain the status of a legally-enforced monopoly, something which should be anathema in a free society. The fundamentalists are right: why should they be forced to pay for an educational system which won't allow their children to be taught religious values? But the liberals and secularists have a point too, in that to teach *any* religious views is necessarily to teach *some particular* religious views. And that is expressly forbidden to government by the Constitution.

What is the solution? In the area of education, to get rid of the public school system and to set in motion a free, diverse market in education, so that each group is free to patronize those schools which promote those values they want to see their children taught, and neither is forced to subsidize the other. Otherwise, we are merely arguing about *which* point of view should be given a monopoly, *which* particular views and values government should teach the young. And that, clearly, is a dead end, and will only lead to a new religious warfare.

That, sadly, is apparently what some conservatives want to see. In a column attacking secular humanism, entitled "America's Coming Religious War," Partrick Buchanan asked "Why... shouldn't society reflect in its laws, customs and traditions the values and views of the majority?"

On this point, at least, the secular humanists seem to be making a breakthrough. In a response to Buchanan published in *Free Inquiry* (a magazine he edits), Paul Kurtz responded that "The State Should Be Neutral." He wrote that

> If we go back to the origins of the American republic, we can appreciate the reasons for the separation of church and state. The wide diversity of denominations and sects in America have often vehemently disagreed about their religious beliefs and the moral implications inherent in them. The greatness of America has been that a variety of groups (religious and nonreligious) have coexisted in a situation where the state has remained *neutral*, favoring no one religion but serving to protect the rights and free expression of all.... [S]hould not all citizens be permitted to enjoy the blessings of liberty in the spirit of cooperation and tolerance—without the threat of a new religious war?

But how to accomplish this is no simple matter. It certainly means the abolition of the public school, which is *necessarily* a focus of conflict, because of the different conceptions of what it should do and how held by diverse people in a pluralistic society. It means that government should get out of the business of imposing all sorts of views on people, whether these be views concerning economic values (such as equality), lifestyles (drugs and homosexuality), or anything else. Government should protect individual rights, and stop brainwashing and coercing people.

What has happened is that liberals have used government to attempt to "shape" society according to their own values, and have made a mess of things. Now conservatives want their chance to do the same. Some secular humanists, like Paul Kurtz, are coming to understand this, and are moving very close to a libertarian solution to the problem: to replace *any* theocracy with peaceful coexistence among people of different creeds and lifestyles, accepting the fact that some people will always act in ways that we dislike.

That is something Rev. Falwell and Company ought to ponder: whose side are they really on? The side of liberty and tolerance, or of regimentation and repression? ❑

—RAC

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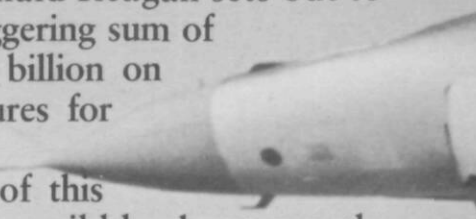
The Soviet Union poses no conventional threat whatever to the United States

THE ARMS RACE: Billions for Insecurity

JEFFREY ROGERS HUMMEL



As President Ronald Reagan sets out to squander the staggering sum of more than $200 billion on defense expenditures for fiscal year 1982, most opponents of this increase can only quibble about exactly how high defense spending should go. Virtually no one prominent in the public arena is arguing for outright reductions in the size of the U.S. military establishment.

Edward N. Luttwak, a senior fellow at the Georgetown Center for Strategic Studies, boldly asserts in an article in the September 1980 issue of *Commentary* that "the great debate over the facts of the military balance is finally over." He adds that "it is only the grossly ill-informed, the self-deceived, and the willfully deceiving who will still argue the point. Otherwise the great majority of the voices in our public life have come to agree that the armed strength of the United States has been allowed to decline well beyond the limits of tolerable risk, and certainly to a level of net inferiority vis-a-vis Soviet military power in its totality."

Are those who will still argue the point truly "ill-informed, self-deceived, or willfully deceiving?" To give an adequate answer to that question, as even Luttwak would agree, we cannot simply look at the current military balance. We need what has

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HERMAN J. KOKOJAN/BLACK STAR

become known in the military bean-counting game as "dynamic analysis," an analysis that looks at the past trends and projects them into the future.

So let us take a long hard look at the 35-year history of the arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. When we do, we will discover that the United States government is responsible for instigating the arms race and giving it forward momentum. It has done so in the name of national security, and yet national security is the primary casualty of the arms race.

During World War II, both the United States and the Soviet Union had approximately 12 million men and women under arms. Both sides demobilized after the war: the Soviet Union by 75 percent, down to less than 3 million troops, and the United States by 85 percent, down to approximately 1.5 million troops. The consequent two-to-one Soviet lead was even more substantial in ground troops, because the U.S. had a much greater proportion of its troops in naval and air forces.

From these figures a myth of U.S. post-war disarmament has arisen. In fact, after every previous war, U.S. demobilization had been almost total. During the period between the two World Wars, for instance, the size of U.S. armed forces never exceeded 500,000. The maintenance of a million and a half persons under arms was totally unprecedented in U.S. history.

There is a second, much more significant, respect in which U.S. post-war disarmament is a myth. At the close of World War II, the United States had a monopoly on atomic weapons, and it was clearly prepared to use this monopoly in order to direct the course of world politics to its advantage.

The American development of the atomic bomb resulted, in fact, from an earlier arms race—an arms race with Nazi Germany. When Albert Einstein wrote his letter of August 1939 to President Roosevelt pointing out the feasibility of atomic weapons, one of his most pressing arguments was his belief that the Nazis would develop this new super weapon if the U.S. did not do so first. Consequently, the U.S. embarked on a crash program to build the bomb.

When America was king

When the U.S. detonated its first atomic explosion at Alamogordo, New Mexico in 1945, enough fissionable material was available for exactly three bombs. The first, made of plutonium, was the test device. The second, a 12.5 kiloton bomb using U-235, was dropped untested over Hiroshima, and the third, another plutonium bomb of 22 kilotons, was destined for Nagasaki. With the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States government acquired the distinction, which it holds to this day, of being the only gov-

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ernment ever actually to use nuclear weapons to kill people.

After the war's end, the U.S. began to build a huge atomic arsenal. By 1949, it had tested eight nuclear devices and had stockpiled several hundred atomic bombs, which could duplicate in a few hours all the destruction that had been wrought in Germany by the explosives dropped during the entire course of World War II.

Not only did the United States monopolize the bomb, but it also held a monopoly on the means of delivering it. At the close of World War II, the only aircraft capable of carrying the early, cumbersome, five-ton bombs was the U.S. B-29, a medium-range bomber that would have to use foreign bases to reach the Soviet Union. In 1946, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was organized, and in 1948 SAC received its first post-war bombers. The B-36 long-range bomber gave the United States the ability, for the first time, to hit the Soviet Union from U.S. bases. With its limited accuracy from an altitude of 40,000 feet, the B-36 was explicitly designed to drop atomic bombs on cities, rather than on military targets. SAC then supplemented the B-36 with B-50 medium-range bombers stationed at bases in England and the Far East.

This early mushrooming of the U.S. nuclear arsenal signaled the beginning of the arms race and took place, it should be emphasized, at a time when the Soviet Union had *no* atomic weapons. The U.S. atomic monopoly was broken only in August 1949, when the Soviet Union exploded its first bomb. This occurred in an atmosphere of growing Cold War hysteria, and U.S. reaction to the Soviet success was frantic. President Truman ordered the immediate development of the hydrogen bomb, a weapon of potentially limitless yield.

Truman also asked for a secret study of the implications of Soviet possession of the atomic bomb. The resulting document — National Security Council Paper #68 (NSC 68), completed early in 1950—has become a text-book example of Cold War paranoia. "It is quite clear," NSC 68 authoritatively observed, "that the Kremlin seeks to bring the free world under its domination." The paper grimly predicted that by 1954, "the Soviet Union would have the nuclear capability to launch a devastating attack on the United States." It went on to seriously consider a preventive war against the Soviet Union, but, as an alternative, urged a policy of U.S. rearmament and worldwide alliances. All of this, at a time when the Soviet Union was still recovering from the devastation of World War II and had *no means of delivering* what few atomic weapons it possessed.

Shortly after the circulation of NSC 68, the Korean War began, and these two events conspired to produce a jump in U.S. defense expenditures from $15 billion in 1949 to $50 billion in 1953. The size of U.S. armed forces doubled to over 3 million personnel; the Navy got a new fleet of aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, amphibious warfare ships, and other vessels; while the Air Force began to develop its "century" series of fighters. SAC got its first jet bomber, the medium-range B-47, and mastered the technique of air-refueling so that its medium-range bombers could reach the Soviet Union from locations within the United States. Finally, in 1952 the U.S. exploded its first thermonuclear device, which it followed in 1954 with the first true hydrogen bomb.

The response of the Soviet Union to this increasing U.S. militarization and to the rearming that the U.S. had thrust upon West Germany in 1952 was to double the size of its

A full B-52 crew stands in front of their plane at Ellsworth Air Force Base. At left, without a helmet, is the crew chief.

HERMAN J. KOKOJAN/BLACK STAR

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own armed forces, which peaked at nearly 6 million personnel in 1955. In 1953 the Soviets exploded their first thermonuclear device. The Soviets' naval and air capabilities, however, were insignificant, and they still did not have a long-range bomber that could reach the United States.

During the Eisenhower years, U.S. defense expenditures, under the onslaught of Republican economy measures, declined sightly, although they never fell to the pre-Korean War level. They remained in the $40 billion range, at approximately 10 percent of U.S. gross national product (GNP). This modicum of sanity in the realm of conventional armament was styled the "New Look," but it was more than compensated for by the doctrine of "massive retaliation" in the realm of nuclear weapons, which meant that the U.S. reserved to itself the right to punish with nuclear attack any nation that it defined as an aggressor.

In 1955, the B-52, a long-range subsonic jet bomber that remains today the mainstay of the U.S. strategic bomber force, was introduced, and by 1957, over 700 were in service, supplemented by 1800 medium-range B-47s. The U.S. also deployed what are misleadingly called "tactical" nuclear weapons, so labeled, not because their yield is any less destructive than that of "strategic" nuclear weapons, but because their delivery range is shorter. They were given to U.S. troops in Europe during this period in order to counterbalance the continuing Soviet ground superiority in the area. Tactical nuclear warheads were designed for everything: recoilless rifles, towed and self-propelled artillery, and a whole array of tactical missiles of varying ranges. U.S. tactical aircraft also acquired a nuclear capability, which allowed the huge U.S. fleet of aircraft carriers to join the burgeoning nuclear arsenal.

Then in July of 1955, at the Soviet Air Show, the Soviets put on display their new Mya-4 Bison long-range bomber. *For the first time,* the Soviet Union could threaten the United States with nuclear attack! Throughout the previous ten year period that saw the growth of the U.S. nuclear arsenal to awesome proportions, the circulation among the defense elite of the apocalyptic NSC 68, and the dramatic remilitarization of the United States, the ability of the Soviets to strike the U.S. with nuclear weapons was completely non-existent.

The bomber and missile gaps

One would have expected that the failure of a massive Soviet nuclear capability to materialize in 1954, as predicted in NSC 68, would have shamed the doomsayers into silence. Instead, the unfulfilled prophecies were swept under the rug, while new updated predictions were brought forth to terrify the American people. Now that the Soviets had finally achieved a nuclear-delivery capability, U.S. leaders warned about the emerging "bomber gap." The U.S. Air Force projected that the Soviets would have a two-to-one strategic advantage over the U.S. within two years.

The "bomber gap" never materialized either, but it did serve to accelerate some of the arms development projects in progress at the time. Among these were the B-58, a supersonic medium-range jet bomber first deployed in 1960 (and later replaced by the FB-111), and the B-70, its long-range counterpart that never saw service.

In 1957, the Soviets tested the first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICMB) and then later that same year used the ICBM to put the first artificial satellite into orbit around the earth. While "bomber gap" mythology had given a slight surge to the arms race, it was nothing compared to the mileage that militarists got out of the "missile gap."

The missile gap was formalized by another top secret government review of Soviet capabilities called the Gaither Report. Circulated in 1957, it warned that the Soviet threat would "become critical by 1959 or early 1960." By then, the Soviets would possess "significant ICBM delivery capability with megaton warheads." The report included what has become a staple of Soviet-threat literature: a graph showing U.S. superiority in the past, parity in the present, and Soviet superiority in the future. The solution, again, was increased military spending, along with a multibillion dollar civil defense effort.

President Eisenhower dismissed the Gaither Report and attempted to hold the line on military spending. Unfortunately, the early string of Soviet space achievements made this difficult, and in the last years of his administration, defense expenditures began to creep upward. Worse still, syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop leaked the contents of the Gaither Report to the press in the summer of 1959. As a result, the "missile gap" became a very effective campaign issue in John F. Kennedy's bid for the presidency in 1960.

What were the facts of the "missile gap?" The Soviet firsts were partially a consequence of decisions made by U.S. military planners back in 1946. At that time, atomic bombs were so heavy that the idea of delivering them with ballistic missiles did not seem promising, so the U.S. military decided to focus its energy on development of air-breathing winged cruise missiles, which would be more capable of carrying heavy loads.

The U.S. cruise missile program was pushed through the early '50s and resulted in the development of 3 missiles: a submarine or ship-launched cruise missile, the Regulus, in 1954; a tactical cruise missile, the Matador, for Europe in 1955; and an intercontinental-range subsonic cruise missile, the Snark, in 1960. The U.S. was also well along the road to deploying an advanced intercontinental supersonic cruise missile, the Navaho, which was cancelled in 1957 with the shift of attention to ballistic missiles.

While the U.S. worked on cruise-missile technology, the Soviet Union, building upon the German rocket program of World War II, went ahead with ballistic missiles. With this earlier start, the Soviets were able to test an ICBM (the SS-6 Spawood) first.

Testing an ICBM, however, is different from actually *deploying* an operational ICBM. Around 1955, the U.S. commitment to cruise missiles began to flag. Not only had U.S. intelligence become aware of the Soviet ballistic missile program, but revolutionary advances in nuclear technology promised lighter and lighter warheads. Consequently, by 1958 the U.S. initiated no less than six crash programs to develop ballistic missiles: Thor, Jupiter, Atlas, Polaris, Titan, and Minuteman.

The Thor and Jupiter were intermediate-range ballistic missiles which were tested in 1957 and by 1960 were ringing the Soviet Union from locations in Greece, Italy, and Britain. The first U.S. ICBM, Atlas, was successfully tested in 1958 and deployed in 1960. In 1960, the U.S. also deployed Polaris, a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM).

Thus, by 1960, in addition to its bomber force of 540 long-range B-52s and 1775 medium-range bombers (which could be refueled in the air), the U.S. had 20 Atlas ICBMs, 48 Polaris SLBMs, 30 Snark cruise missiles, 60 Jupiter and Thor missiles stationed in Europe within range of the Soviet Union, and 57 Regulus cruise missiles aboard submarines and ships, for a total of over 2500 nuclear delivery vehicles, all capable of reaching the Soviet Union. (Add to that ap-

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proximately 10,000 tactical nuclear weapons on artillery shells, tactical missiles, and aircraft carriers in or near Europe.)

In contrast, the Soviet Union had 160 long-range bombers and perhaps as many as 35 ICBMs with nuclear warheads capable of reaching the U.S., for a total of just under 200 nuclear delivery vehicles clearly capable of reaching the U.S. (They also had 1000 medium-range bombers, which *might* be able to reach the U.S. on one-way suicide missions if they flew high enough to conserve fuel; 200 intermediate and medium-range ballistic missiles that could hit targets in Europe; and 48 short-range SLBMs carried on diesel submarines that rarely could get within range of the U.S. shores.)

In other words, the year—1960—by which the Gaither Report had predicted a clear Soviet lead in nuclear deliverability actually saw the U.S. with an incredible 25-to-2 nuclear advantage over the Soviets. Furthermore, the entire Soviet nuclear arsenal was subject to a preemptive counterforce strike by U.S. forces. Soviet ICBMs were not in silos and required at least half an hour to be fueled before launch, during which period the U.S.'s increasingly accurate B-52s could catch the missiles, as well as Soviet bombers, on the ground.

Yet, there is one sense in which the predictions of the Gaither panel had already borne fruit in 1960. Despite the overwhelming U.S. nuclear lead, the American people were now vulnerable to nuclear attack themselves. The number of Soviet bombers and missiles that could have gotten through in 1960 is uncertain. The 160 bombers faced a U.S. air defense network of 2700 interceptor fighters and 4400 surface-to-air missiles (many of which carried nuclear warheads themselves), while the 35 Soviet ICBMs faced the notorious reliability problems that plagued the first generation of both U.S. and Soviet ICBMs. Assume, optimistically, that less than a third of the bombers, each carrying two one-megaton bombs, and less than half the ICBMs could get through to targets within the U.S. Such a "limited" attack would still have resulted in more than 100 nuclear explosions, surely enough to have devastated U.S. society.

Here we confront the stark but paradoxical reality of the arms race. After 15 years of keeping well ahead of the Soviets, the U.S. government had only succeeded in making the American people enormously less secure than they had been in the first place. No one can possibly doubt that if the arms race had been halted in 1950 or 1955, everyone would have been much better off.

The search for flexible response

With the dawning realization of U.S. vulnerability, the Kennedy Administration was forced to renounce the doctrine of "massive retaliation." With U.S. cities clearly at risk, the attempt to influence the outcome of every international confrontation with the threat of nuclear retaliation was no longer credible. The search for non-nuclear alternatives to "massive retaliation" led to the replacement of the "New Look" with the doctrine of "flexible response" and another round of massive increases in the defense budget in order to improve the U.S. conventional capability. The Kennedy administration pledged to meet every challenge to U.S. authority, not with nuclear weapons, but with an appropriately scaled conventional response.

"Flexible response" entailed the requirement that U.S. armed forces be sufficient to fight two and a half wars: one in Europe, one in Asia, and half a war in the western hemisphere. (In later years, this requirement was scaled down to a more modest one and a half wars.) To fulfill this mission, defense expenditures were hiked by 15 percent in Kennedy's first year and continued a steady rise, both in nominal and real terms, thereafter. All the services received new, more modern equipment. And "flexible response" also led almost inevitably to U.S intervention in Vietnam. Whether the Vietnam conflict counted as one or just half a war, it helped sustain the increase in defense expenditures.

The strategic counterpart to "flexible response" was "mutual deterrence." Cynics began referring to this new doctrine as MAD, or "mutual assured destruction." The Kennedy Administration, at least in its announced policy, accepted the fact of U.S nuclear vulnerability and decided to maintain only enough nuclear weapons to deter a Soviet strike. Under "mutual deterrence," Secretary of Defense McNamara did actually phase out redundant systems and scuttle some of the Pentagon's more exotic weapons, including the Nike-Zeus ABM (anti-ballistic missile) system and the B-70 bomber.

In 1962, McNamara acknowledged publicly that the "missile gap" had been a myth. Although this admission came too late to save Americans from Kennedy's fallout shelter mania, it should have led the administration to the conclusion that ICBMs and SLBMs, the other two weapons in the U.S. strategic triad, were, like the bombers, sufficient. Instead McNamara actually stepped up the production of U.S. missile forces.

At this time, the first solid-fueled ICBM, the Minuteman, was coming into service. More reliable than previous liquid-fueled missiles, the Minuteman could be launched instantaneously from underground silos. Rather than simply use the Minuteman to phase out and replace the older ballistic and cruise missiles, the U.S. each year deployed greater numbers of Minuteman. Finally in 1967, the Pentagon froze the number of Minuteman missiles at 1000, supplemented by 54 Titan II's with storable liquid-fuel. Simultaneously, the number of U.S. missile-carrying submarines soared to 41, carrying 656 SLBMs.

This escalation in missile building occurred at a time when the U.S. already had an overpowering strategic nuclear superiority. By 1963, the Soviet Union still only had 100 operational ICBMs, while 32 submarines each carrying no more than three short-range SLBMs accounted for the Soviet sea-based nuclear force. Khrushchev made an ill-fated attempt to redress somewhat the strategic imbalance by placing intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. According to the U.S. double-standard, however, U.S. missiles near Soviet borders in Greece and Turkey were considered merely defensive, while Soviet missiles near U.S. borders in Cuba were obviously "offensive." Kennedy brought the world the closest it has ever been to nuclear war in order to drive the Soviet missiles out of Cuba. The Soviets, keenly aware of the U.S. nuclear advantage, backed down.

In the aftermath of this humiliation and the apparent unwillingness of the U.S. to curb its missile production despite clear superiority, the Soviets began their own large-scale missile buildup. Between 1965 and 1971, the Soviets deployed ICBMs in earnest, eventually surpassing the U.S. by 50 percent in total numbers. This deployment included the first Soviet solid-fueled ICBM (the SS-13 Savage), which did not become operational until 1968. The Soviets finally stopped at 1500 ICBMs, most of them in hardened silos, in 1971, in the middle of the SALT I negotiations.

The Soviets did not rival the U.S. SLBM capability until much later. Not until 1968 did the first Soviet nuclear-pow-

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ered submarine carrying long-range SLBMs, similar to the Polaris, go into service. By 1977, the Soviets stabilized the number of their strategic SLBMs at about 950 contained in 62 submarines. This figure, also, was 50 percent higher than that of the U.S.

This 50 percent Soviet lead in the number of missiles became enshrined in the SALT I Treaty, which was signed in 1972. Unfortunately, the U.S. acceptance of this Soviet lead did not stem from any return to sanity or abandonment of the futile quest for the chimera of nuclear superiority. The U.S. accepted a larger number of Soviet missiles only because, by the time that SALT I went into effect, new technology — the MIRV (multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles) — had made the number of missiles essentially irrelevant.

In the early '60s, the U.S. put on its missiles high-speed reentry vehicles with high ballistic coefficients and with such penetration aides as chaff and decoys to confuse anti-ballistic missile (ABM) radars. In 1964, the Polaris A-3 SLBM, which secretly carried a warhead with three MRVs (multiple reentry vehicles), became operational.

MRVs and MIRVs—a new level of danger

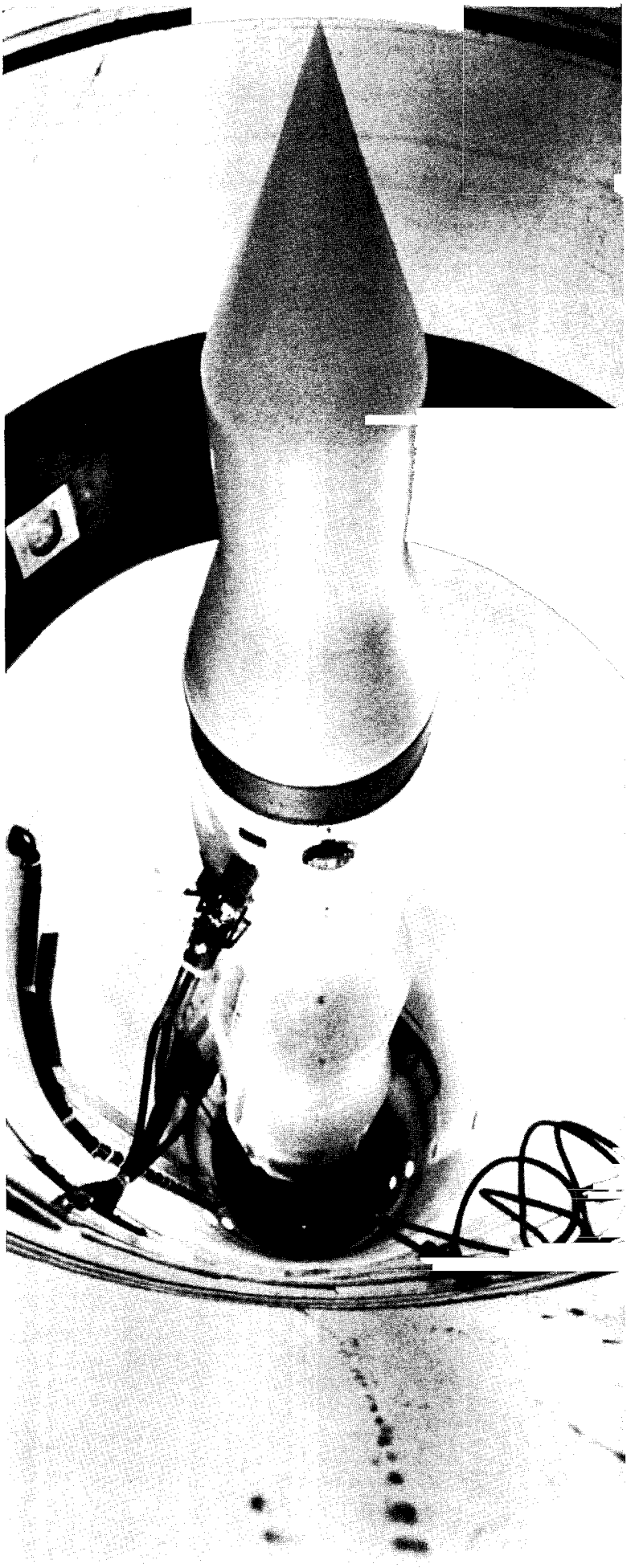
MRVs give a single missile the ability to hit only one target with several warheads, while MIRVs permit a single missile to hit several different targets. MIRVs, like MRVs, were justified as an anti-ABM penetration aide, but in fact, MIRVs constitute the most significant technological innovation in the arms race since the ballistic missile. Their introduction allowed an increase in the number of nuclear warheads without any increase in the number of missiles. In addition, with MIRVs, a nuclear aggressor could potentially destroy in a preemptive counterforce strike the enemy's entire ICBM force with only a fraction of his own ICBM force.

The U.S. began to develop MIRVs in 1964, and they came into service in 1970. Since then, the U.S. has MIRVed more of its missiles each year and quadrupled the number of warheads its missiles carry. Once again, the Pentagon alarmists had used a non-existent Soviet capability to justify an escalation of the arms race to a much more destructive and dangerous level. With the stakes raised, it was predictable that the Soviets would soon follow with their own MIRVs. Yet, the Joint Chiefs of Staff rejected the suggestion that a limitation on MIRVs be part of the SALT I Treaty.

In 1969, Secretary of Defense Laird announced that the Soviets had already tested MIRVs on their SS-9 Scarp ICBM. Not only did this announcement bolster the Pentagon's rejection of any potential moratorium on MIRVs, but it also helped justify the particular Safeguard ABM deployment that was being promoted at the time. Laird claimed that this MIRV test proved that the Soviets were "going for a first-strike capability," necessitating some defense of Minuteman silos.

In fact, the SS-9 test that U.S. intelligence had observed was a MRV test, and not a MIRV test. Despite pressure from Kissinger, who was then assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the CIA refused to budge from its estimate that the Soviets only had MRVs and not MIRVs. The CIA was right. The Soviets did not actually flight test MIRVs until four years later and did not deploy them until 1975, *five years* after the U.S. had done so.

In addition to Laird's inaccuracy about the SS-9 and the ABM debate, the early Nixon years were noteworthy for several other aberrations. For instance, Laird also claimed in



HERMAN J. KOKOJAN/BLACK STAR

The Minuteman, the first solid-fueled ICBM, was also the first missile that could be launched from underground silos.

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1969 that the Soviets were deploying a fractional orbital bombardment system, i.e., an ICBM that by launching its warhead into temporary orbit could approach the U.S. from the south rather than over the North Pole. The Soviets, in fact, never deployed such a system. During the same period, the Air Force's long-standing dream for a long-range supersonic bomber was resurrected as the B-1 and almost put into production, but was cancelled in 1977.

With the winding down of the Vietnam War, however, and the signing of SALT I, along with Nixon's trip to China and the emergence of detente, the tempo of the arms race slackened a bit. The number of men and women in the U.S. armed forces was reduced to about 2 million. Defense expenditures, in real terms, decreased almost to the low of the Eisenhower years. That portion of GNP devoted to defense dropped from 10 to nearly 5 percent. Tensions eased, and negotiations for SALT II commenced.

Unfortunately, the spirit of detente did not even last out the decade. The first indication that a new bout in the arms race was in the offing appeared during the last year of the Ford administration. The CIA regularly compiles national intelligence estimates (NIEs) that assess the military capabilities of other nations. In 1976, hardliners in the government attacked the CIA's most recent NIE as too easy on the Soviet Union. In response to this criticism, Ford appointed a group of outsiders, known as Team B, to review the CIA's findings. Their report was simply an updated rehash of NSC 68 and the Gaither Report and concluded that the Soviets were currently engaged in a massive military buildup and would soon surpass the U.S.

President Carter, when he first came to office, rejected the findings of Team B, but as his term continued he began to waver. Men like Paul Nitze—an author of NSC 68, on the Gaither panel, Secretary of the Navy and Deputy Secretary of Defense in the '60s, and predictably, a member of Team B—and private pressure groups like Nitze's Committee on the Present Danger and the American Security Council launched a very effective campaign to increase military spending. The growth of the defense budget during Carter's four years, from $90 billion to $160 billion, demonstrates its success. Some of the increase results from double digit inflation, but most of it represents a hefty expansion of real military expenditures.

At the same time, the ratification of the SALT II treaty stalled, while relations between the Soviet Union and the U.S. deteriorated. Carter announced his decision to deploy in Europe the Pershing II and a new ground-launched cruise missile, both tactical nuclear weapons with sufficient range to reach the USSR. Thus, detente had already been sabotaged well before Reagan's election.

The myth of Soviet superiority

The recent military appraisals of Team B and the Committee on the Present Danger, however, can be shown to have no more validity than the past appraisals of the Gaither Report and NSC 68. The conventional balance between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, for instance, remains substantially where it has been throughout the arms race. The Soviets now have approximately 4 million individuals in their armed forces, as compared with 2 million for the U.S. Thus, the two-to-one Soviet advantage that materialized at the end of World War II and persisted through the Soviet and U.S. troop buildups of the '50s continues unchanged today.

Actually, this apparent two-to-one Soviet advantage is somewhat misleading. Included in the Soviet total are 385,000 troops in the strategic rocket forces, 550,000 troops in the air defense forces, 460,000 border guards and internal security forces, 500,000 personnel with civilian functions, and approximately 600,000 troops stationed in the Far East, mainly on the Chinese border. Similar categories for the U.S. occupy only about 200,000 individuals, leaving the U.S. with 1.85 million men and women available for a European conflict opposing 1.7 million for the Soviet Union—a quite astonishing phenomenon in light of the fact that the Soviet Union is a European nation while the U.S. is not.

Of course, when comparing only ground troops, the Soviet advantage reappears, and it extends, at least in numbers, to such military hardware as tanks and artillery. This asymmetry has also persisted throughout the post-war period, resulting from the fact that the U.S. devotes larger relative proportions of its overall forces to its air and naval components.

Many discussions of the Soviet threat question whether the U.S. will continue to dominate the oceans, pointing out that the Soviet navy now has a lead over the U.S. navy in surface combat ships: 289 to 173. Yet many Soviet ships are small and suitable only for coastal defense. The U.S. has a two-to-one lead over the Soviets in total naval *tonnage.*

More important, the navy includes what the U.S. military calls its "power projection" capability: forces with the ability to project U.S. military power around the globe. The basic ship for "power projection" is the modern U.S. aircraft carrier, boasting a crew of 5,000 and a complement of 100 aircraft. They are floating weapons platforms that allow the U.S. to stand off from any coastline in the world and conduct bombing and air strikes, and are even equipped with tactical nuclear weapons. The U.S. now has 14 of them.

In contrast, the Soviet Union has none, unless one counts their 4 small carriers for helicopters and vertical take-off and landing aircraft. None of the small Soviet carriers can launch high-performance aircraft, while all of the U.S. carriers can. The Soviet carriers are actually more similar to the 12 U.S. helicopter carriers that are part of the U.S. fleet of amphibious warfare ships.

This fleet of 65 amphibious warfare ships also gives the U.S. "power projection" capability. It can deliver 1⅓ Marine divisions with all their equipment anywhere in the world and support them as they conduct an amphibious invasion. The Soviet Union has fewer than 30 much smaller amphibious warfare ships, which are unable to operate very far from Soviet borders.

The Pentagon is striving to deepen its "power projection" capability by obtaining the C-X, which is a new large intercontinental transport plane, and by stationing a fleet of maritime prepositioning ships, with caches of arms and equipment, near any region where the U.S. might intervene. When contrasted with the unchallenged U.S. supremacy in "power projection," the fact that the Soviets are for the first time acquiring a nascent "blue water" navy pales into insignificance. Without "power projection," the USSR can mount conventional assaults only upon areas contiguous with its borders. The Soviets pose no conventional threat whatever to the U.S.

Although this review of conventional forces is not exhaustive, it is sufficient to establish the point. Those few areas where the Soviets possess an advantage are the same whether one calculates the balance in 1950, 1965, or today. Admittedly, U.S. superiority over the Soviets in many realms may not be as great as it was 15 years ago. No one would deny that half a decade of relatively lower defense budgets

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has had some effect on the status of U.S. military forces. To admit, however, that the gap between the U.S. and the Soviet Union has closed somewhat is a far cry from accepting the alarmists' groundless claims of net U.S. inferiority.

U.S. superiority in strategic nuclear weapons is even more unqualified. The Soviet 50 percent edge in missiles has also given them an edge in such measures as throw-weight and equivalent megatonnage, *if* only strategic missiles are considered. Once long-range bombers are included in the comparison, all those same measures show a U.S. lead. Furthermore, the only figure that really matters is the number of deliverable nuclear warheads, and the U.S. exceeds the Soviets in warheads whether we include bombers or not.

Counterforce

The most recent discovery of U.S. arms zealots is the alleged vulnerability of U.S. land-based ICBMs to a Soviet first strike within a few years, because of Soviet improvements in the accuracy of their ICBMS. What *are* the comparative first-strike capabilities of Soviet and U.S. ICBMs?

Perhaps the most terrifying and most oft cited missile in the Soviet arsenal is the SS-18, one of a new generation of Soviet ICBMs. Since the SS-18 was first deployed in 1974, U.S. intelligence estimates of its characteristics have been revised downward, not once but twice! Originally, the single warhead version of the SS-18 supposedly carried a 50 megaton warhead while the MIRVed version carried 3 warheads of a megaton each. New estimates by the Pentagon admit that the single warhead version carries no more than 25 megatons, while the MIRVed versions carry warheads less than a megaton in yield. The reliability of these new estimates, considering the tendency of the Pentagon to exaggerate Soviet capabilities, is open to question.

The accuracy of an ICBM is measured by giving the radius within which one half of the warheads are expected to fall (the smaller the radius, the more accurate the missile) — called a Circular Error Probable (CEP). The most accurate MIRVed version of the SS-18 is the Mod 4, which carries ten 500 kiloton warheads with a CEP of 850 feet. This combination of accuracy and yield gives the SS-18 Mod 4 approximately a 60 percent chance of destroying a U.S. Minuteman silo hardened to 2000 pounds per square inch of overpressure. The SS-18 Mod 2, with eight 900 kiloton MIRVs and a CEP of 1400 feet has a single-shot kill probability against Minuteman silos of only 40 percent.

The U.S. Minuteman III with the new Mark 12-A warhead carries three 335 kiloton MIRVs with a CEP of 730 feet. Against a Soviet silo hardened to 2500 pounds per square inch of overpressure, the Minuteman III Mark 12-A has a single-shot kill probability of 55 percent. The accuracy of the SS-18 over the next few years is expected to improve and equal that currently achieved by the Minuteman III. This will raise the kill probability of the SS-18 against U.S. silos to about 85 percent. Over the same period, improvements in the Minuteman's guidance system will bring its CEP down to 490 feet and its kill probability up to 85 percent. In short, U.S. and Soviet counterforce capabilities are roughly equivalent, and neither side has the ability to make a successful first strike.

In addition, Minuteman vulnerability does not even matter. Even if the Soviets conducted a successful preemptive attack that wiped out all U.S. ICBMs, all U.S. long-range bombers, and the 45 percent of U.S. missile-launching submarines that are not continuously on station — within

The Myth of Imminent Superiority

Since the end of World War II, three key U.S. government reports — NSC 68 (1950), the Gaither Report (1960), and the "Team B" report (1976) — have predicted, incorrectly, imminent Soviet nuclear superiority over the U.S., setting off new rounds of weapons buildup by the U.S. with the Soviet Union scrambling to catch up a few years later. As the following chart shows, the U.S. has been the first to develop and deploy every major nuclear weapons technology, with the exception of the ICBM (which itself was the Soviet response to U.S. development of cruise missiles starting in 1954).

WEAPONS SYSTEM	US	USSR
Atomic bomb	1945	1949
Long-range bomber	1948	1955
Thermonuclear bomb	1952	1953
Submarine-launched ballistic missile	1954	1955
Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), liquid fuel	1959	1957
Nuclear submarine with ballistic missiles	1960	1968
Solid fuel ICBM	1963	1968
Multiple re-entry vehicle (MRV) — multiple warheads, one target	1964	1972
Multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles (MIRV) — multiple warheads, multiple targets	1970	1975

The U.S. arms push was often accelerated by "confirmed" reports of new Soviet weapons which never, in fact, existed. U.S. attempts to develop a nuclear-powered airplane during the '50s, for example, were fueled by reports from no less an authority than *Aviation Week* (now *Aviation Week and Space Technology*), which announced in its December 1958 issue: "...we are publishing the first account of a Soviet nuclear powered bomber prototype along with engineering sketches as the available data permits." The magazine went on to bemoan that "once again the Soviets have beaten us needlessly to a significant technological punch." This Soviet bomber was a total fabrication, as was the "Bounder," a long-range supersonic bomber allegedly built by the Soviets in 1963, and reported as fact by the usually authoritative *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*, which dropped all mention of it in future editions.

In 1969, Defense Secretary Melvin Laird announced that the Soviets were testing multiple independently target re-entry vehicles (MIRV's), and used this information both to end all discussion of a moratorium on U.S. MIRV development, and to push for acceleration of an ABM (anti-ballistic missile) system. Later, the alleged Soviet MIRV's turned out to be MRV's — that is, multiple warheads without multiple target capacity. Actual Soviet MIRV's were not deployed until 1975, five years after the deployment of U.S. MIRV's.

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range and ready to fire—at any particular time, that would still have the U.S. with a nuclear arsenal of approximately 3000 warheads carrying the equivalent of 470 megatons.

Moreover, if the Pentagon is paranoid about the survivability of U.S. ICBMs, imagine how Soviet leaders must feel about the survivability of their land-based ICBMs, which account for a much greater portion of their overall nuclear arsenal. Over 70 percent of Soviet warheads are on their ICBMs, as opposed to less than 25 percent for the U.S.

Furthermore, Soviet missile-carrying submarines are much more vulnerable than their U.S. counterparts. While the U.S. maintains 55 percent of its submarines on station, the Soviets can only keep 10 to 15 percent on station. The U.S. submarines that are on station are all but invulnerable, while the Soviet submarines on station are susceptible to the much more advanced anti-submarine warfare techniques of the U.S. As part of its SOSUS (Sound Surveillance System), the U.S. Navy has scattered over ocean floor between 10 and 25 (the actual number is classified) 200-foot-tall sonar listening towers. The data from these towers is sent to a giant computer in Virginia, which under good conditions can pinpoint within 60 miles hostile submarines anywhere in the world. There is no evidence that the Soviets have anything comparable.

The U.S. also has a fleet of 74 hunter-killer nuclear-powered submarines. The Soviets have a larger fleet of 257 submarines, but 166 of these are diesel powered, and all of the remainder are designed primarily as anti-ship rather than anti-submarine weapons. Most of the U.S. hunter-killer submarines have advanced equipment that allows them to trail Soviet submarines without being detected.

The current U.S. counterforce threat, moreover, is nothing compared to what the U.S. has planned for its next generation of nuclear weapons. The MX missile will carry ten 335 kiloton MIRVs with a CEP of 300 feet, giving it a single-shot hard-target kill probability of 99 percent. The Trident program is endowing the U.S. fleet of missile-launching submarines with dramatic increases in range, yield, accuracy, and number of warheads, while a larger proportion of Trident subs can remain continuously on station. The new cruise missiles which the U.S. has on the verge of production will fly to their targets at subsonic speeds, skimming the ground, and have a terrain-contour matching guidance system that will give pinpoint accuracy. These cruise missiles can be mounted practically anywhere: on bombers, on ships, on submarines, and on the ground. The U.S. eventually plans to deploy 4000 to 6000 of them in various modes. Finally, the U.S. is also working on MARVs: maneuverable reentry vehicles, which unlike MIRVs, will be able to correct deviations from the warhead's planned trajectory during reentry. When operational, MARVs should bring the CEP of both the MX and Trident II missiles down to 90 feet.

With all of these weapons, the Pentagon hopes to retrieve the golden age of U.S. nuclear counterforce supremacy. Counterforce means the ability of a country to destroy or render impotent the military capability of an enemy force. Not until the beginning of the '70s, when the Soviets completed their missile build-up, did the U.S. lose the ability to destroy the entire Soviet nuclear arsenal in a preemptive strike, and only in the past few years have Soviet weapons begun to match those of the U.S. in counterforce punch. Of course, by counterforce, U.S. planners mean "second-strike counterforce," but from the Soviet perspective, U.S. weapons designed for "second-strike counterforce" are indistinguishable from weapons designed for a preemptive first strike. The difference is one of intent, not capability.

During a regular practice exercise at Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, nuclear bomb "shapes," which are bomb casings that are not loaded, are carted to B-52s and placed in the bomb bays.

Summing up the arms race

The first general conclusion that stands out from this historical summary of the arms race is that never once throughout the entire 35-year period has U.S. superiority been in doubt. While Soviet defense expenditures appear to remain fairly constant, U.S. spending has gone through peaks and troughs. The Korean War peak was followed by leaner years under Eisenhower. A second burst of U.S. defense efforts occurred under Kennedy and continued through the Vietnam War, while the years of detente ushered in another trough. Today, we have entered a third expansion in defense spending. During these fluctuations, the gulf between the Soviet Union and the U.S., particularly in the conventional realm, has widened or closed, but a decided

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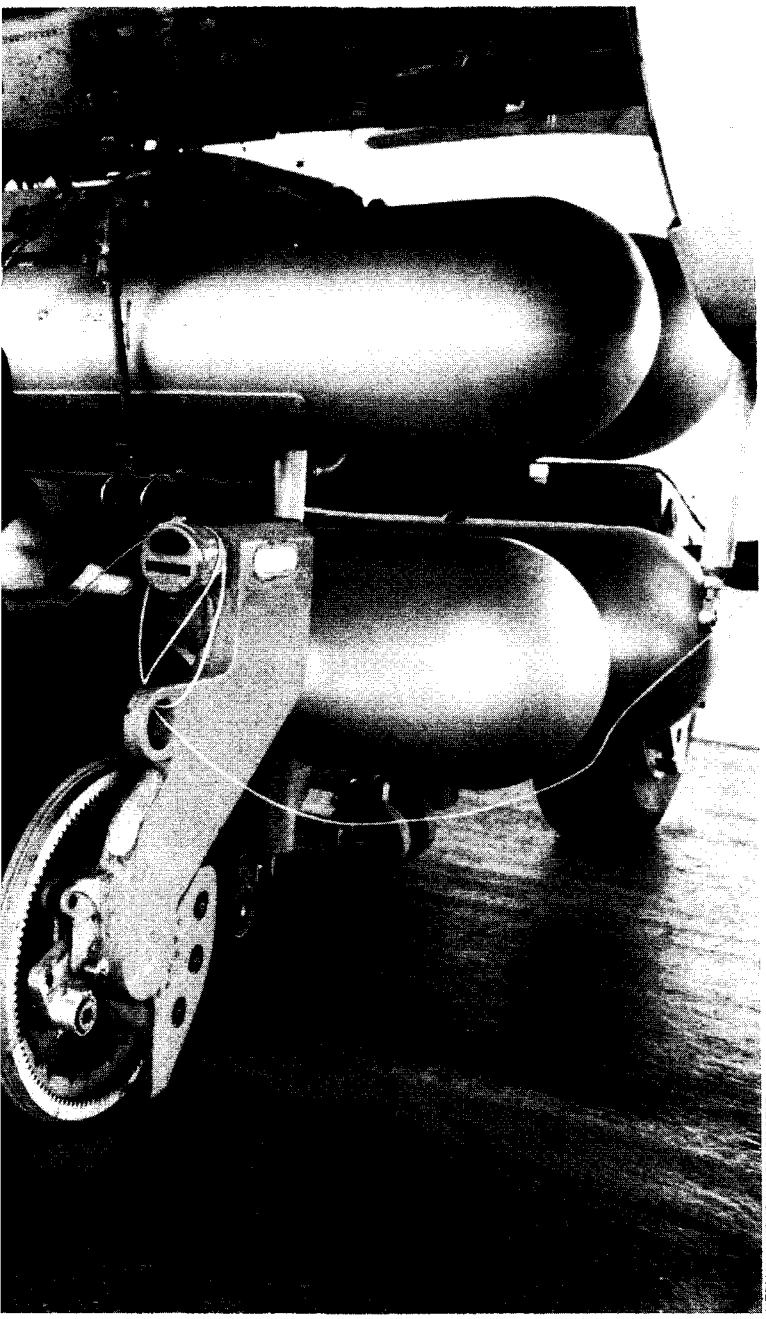

HERMAN J. KOKOJAN/BLACK STAR

U.S. advantage has remained as unaltered fixture of the arms race.

U.S. militarists are always willing to acknowledge that U.S. superiority prevailed in the past. Yet with tedious regularity, they have repeated the assertion that at some point in the future, the Soviets will overtake and surpass the U.S. All of these analyses of the U.S.-Soviet balance have consistently relied upon grossly exaggerated assessments of Soviet capabilities. The "bomber gap," the "missile gap," the "AMB gap," and all the other alleged gaps in U.S. armaments have been total myths. The real gap generally turns out to favor the U.S.

Throughout the arms race, most of the technological innovations have been introduced first by the U.S. The only exception to this rule is the ICBM. The world has been blessed with the atomic bomb, the hydrogen bomb, the jet bomber, the intercontinental bomber, the cruise missile, the ABM, the tactical nuclear weapon, the nuclear submarine carrying long-range ballistic missiles, the solid-fueled ICBM, the MRV, and the MIRV, all through the genius of Yankee ingenuity. In those few cases where the U.S. has not developed a weapon first, such weapons as the nuclear powered airplane or the intercontinental supersonic bomber, the weapon seems not to be developed at all. It is the United States which gives the arms race its forward momentum.

Each of these technological innovations, when introduced, did nothing to increase the security of the American people. The only possible exception, if it had worked, would have been the ABM. Otherwise, all these innovations convey to the U.S. government a military advantage that is useful in threatening opponents but of little value in actual defense.

Eventually, with dogged persistence, the Soviets, after a lag of one to five years, copy every U.S. innovation and deploy it in their own arsenal. The net result is that the U.S. is worse off than if it had never introduced the new weapon at all.

The initial U.S. monopoly on nuclear weapons and their deliverability, while doing very little to defend the American people, gave U.S. leaders an incredible leverage in their conduct of foreign policy. Once the Soviet Union had deliverable nuclear weapons, however, this leverage deteriorated and the American people were much worse off. In 1960, before the U.S. instigated a missile build-up on both sides, the U.S. was subject to a nuclear attack of about 100 warheads. That was an intolerable situation, but it looks positively utopian when compared to the present world where the Soviets have over 6000 warheads, enough to target every U.S. city with a population over 2500 individuals.

This is the real tragedy of the arms race. Every new advance has been justified in the name of security, and every new advance eventually makes Americans less secure. Nowhere else do the unintended consequences of government intervention produce the opposite of the desired goals with more vengeance. The arms race is a deadly demonstration of the inefficacy of government action.

Although one might think that the present balance of terror is about as bad as things can get, contemplate a future world in which the United States has deployed all of its projected, highly accurate, counterforce weapons, *and* the Soviets have matched U.S. capabilities, which they inevitably will do. Both sides will be capable of launching a preemptive first strike. Both sides will be in a "use it or lose it" situation. Both sides, in order to safeguard their nuclear deterrent, will have strong incentives to move to a launch-on-warning posture, where their only problem will be deciding how to target their weapons. No situation could be better designed to insure that any world crisis will escalate to nuclear holocaust.

For anyone genuinely interested in the safety and security of the American people, stopping the arms race should be their highest priority. At some point, U.S. leaders must be forced to recognize that more and better armaments do not translate into improved defense. The initiative for stopping the arms race lies with the U.S. government. Military superiority, in a world of nuclear weapons, has become worse than useless; it is, in fact, totally counterproductive. U.S. leaders must be willing to give up superiority if Americans are ever going to enjoy greater security. Luttwak is wrong; the United States has not declined "to a level of net inferiority vis-a-vis Soviet military power in its totality." The irony is that we would all be a lot safer if he were right. ❑

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THE BUDGET:

SNIPPING AT THE STATUS QUO

DAVID BOAZ

President Reagan's first month in office was the most dramatic of any President since Franklin Roosevelt. His two televised addresses, masterfully performed as usual, convinced an overwhelming majority of the public that his program would work. The bureaucrats and special interests, whatever they may have thought of the plan's actual viability, became convinced that the President really did intend to slash the size of government. The *Washington Post* summed up their reactions in a forbidding headline: "Epic Political Struggle Looms/ Official Washington Realizing Reform Crusade is Not Business-as-Usual."

Reagan offered a four-point program consisting of a budget reform proposal, a tax cut, a reform of monetary policy, and regulatory agency reform and proclaimed that all four were essential to solving the nation's economic problems. He then sent a flock of officials, with administration superstar David Stockman in the lead, whirling around the capital and the country, to sell his program to public and congress alike.

What malady does Reagan propose to cure with his program? He called it "the debilitating combination of sustained inflation and economic distress," while he saw the price of remaining on our present course as "a rising government presence in the economy, more inflation, stagnating productivity and higher unemployment."

Fair enough—but will his proposals cure these very real ills?

The bloated budget

The key to the Reagan proposal is the federal budget, which Reagan alleges he is desperately trying to bring under control. Yet President Carter proposed a federal budget of about $740 billion for 1982, while Reagan is proposing a more modest budget of $695 billion. That cut of some $45 billion out of $740 billion is hardly "massive."

When Ronald Reagan sought the presidency in 1976, the federal budget totaled a then-record $366 billion. He labeled President Ford a spendthrift and pledged to slash that budget by $90 billion. If Reagan had proposed a 1982 budget of $700 billion *then*, Republicans would have scorned him as a bigger spender than Ted Kennedy, the GOP's devil incarnate. But now Reagan makes headlines by pledging a mighty crusade to hold the budget to a mere $700 billion. The question is: does he still believe the 1976 budget was too high, at half that amount? If so, why doesn't he try to cut the 1982 budget back to what he promised then? For even adjusted for inflation, that 1976 budget would be less than $600 billion in 1982, and a 25 percent cut would give us a budget of $450 billion today, not the $700 billion we are offered.

How much has the budget grown over the past few years? That $740 billion budget is $77 billion more than this year's budget, $374 billion larger than the 1976 budget, and a whopping $561 billion more than the 1968 budget, when "big spender" Lyndon Johnson was at the presidential helm. Under President Carter alone, the budget grew by 25 percent in real terms. And even with Reagan's planned reductions in its growth-rate, including every proposed cut in spending, the budget will grow by several hundred billion over the years to come. If this is a "fiscal revolution," as some have claimed, it is of a very odd stripe indeed.

The problem is that political debate in America is always based on an acceptance of the status quo as a starting point. We are told that the budget for 1981, for example, is $663 billion, and that the question is *how much* it should *increase* next year. It's time to break out of this status quo mindset and consider some fundamental reforms. Rather than accept a $663 billion budget as some kind of legitimate starting point, we should start from scratch, consider what programs we really need, how much, if anything, we ought to spend on them, and get rid of the rest. But Reagan is not doing this.

Let's look at the specifics of the budget reform plan. For 1982, Reagan proposes to cut some $45 billion out of a proposed budget of about $740 billion, leaving $695 billion. To be sure, this is a smaller budget than Carter pro-

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posed, and for that we can be grateful. But the reduction is approximately 6 percent in a budget scheduled to increase by 12 percent. So the real impact of the budget plan is to slow the increase in the budget down from 12 percent to 6 percent—an improvement, certainly, but not by much.

Reagan proposed 83 different cuts in his February 18 economic message, and more were added later as budget estimates kept rising and more cuts were needed to keep spending at its projected $695 billion level. Most of the cuts involved changes in indexing and other modest reforms. In short, the programs will be kept around, but they will be kept from increasing as quickly as in the past.

Some of Reagan's proposals would, however, actually phase out programs. He proposes to eliminate the Young Adult and Youth Conservation Corps, the automative research program, the merchant seamen medical services program, and a few other minor programs. He wants to phase out two major CETA programs, while leaving much of CETA intact.

In the energy field, he proposes to eliminate many subsidy programs, something we can only applaud. But while Reagan wants to eliminate the small subsidies to alcohol fuels, solar energy, and biomass programs along with the large synthetic fuel subsidy, he seeks only modest cuts in the fossil energy research program and actually wants to increase nuclear energy subsidies. One can question, then, whether Reagan's commitment is to reducing the cost of government and freeing up the energy industry or simply to helping his own favorite technologies.

For the future, Reagan promises even larger budget savings—$124 billion by 1986, or 13 percent of the scheduled budget in that year. But these projections are based on totally unsupportable economic assumptions. The administration predicts inflation rates of 7.2 percent in 1982 and 6 percent in 1983, well below the Carter administration's more realistic — if depressing — prognosis. Thus there is really no solid estimate as to what spending will be in 1986, or even in 1983, because the projections are thoroughly unrealistic. (Some Democrats have charged that the highest-ranking woman in the Reagan administration is Rosy Scenario, and she seems to have developed these predictions.)

But we should understand that *any* economic predictions are little more than a guess. Even given conventional economic views, without knowing the rates of inflation and unemployment, the administration cannot accurately predict either revenue or expenditures. This is a major problem with any sort of budget analysis or long-range government planning. But even more to the point, the entire scenario which the Reagan administration is painting is based on the worst legacy of a decaying Keynesianism: the validity of economic forecasting based on macroeconomic variables which do little to reflect the complex realities of a market economy. Future economic conditions depend on how people react to changing circumstances and knowledge, and that in turn cannot be predicted by some clairvoyant com-

NOUR NEWS PHOTOS WORLDWIDE

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Office of Management and Budget Director David Stockman in the Cabinet Room.

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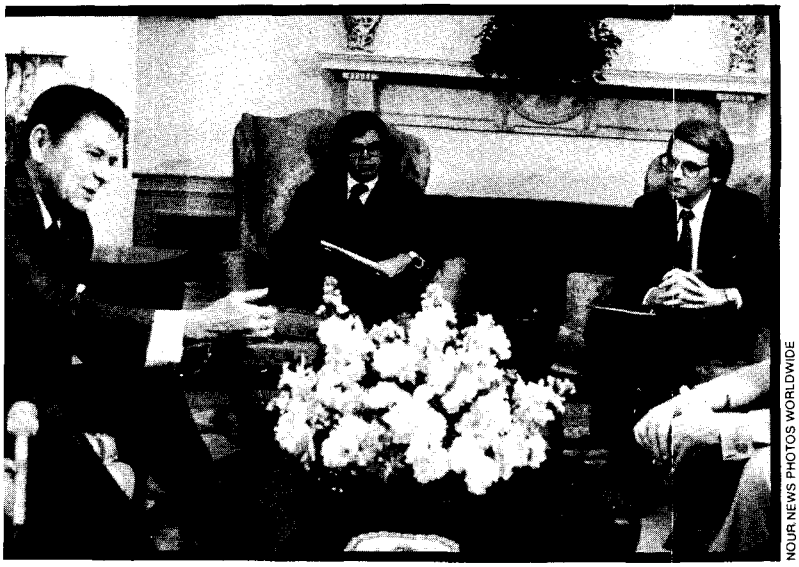

NOUR NEWS PHOTOS WORLDWIDE

President Reagan and his chief domestic policy adviser, Martin Anderson, with David Stockman in the Oval Office.

puter in Washington. Nor can any computer successfully forecast what people *expect* to happen in the future, or how they will tailor their plans to fit their expectations. These sorts of individual decisions are the stuff of which the future is made.

When people don't act as economic "experts" predict, that affects the very numbers on which every administration relies in making its economic predictions. In Reagan's own experience, he was forced to revise his plan for taxes and spending when his budget officials reported that spending would actually be $3 billion to $6 billion higher than previously predicted. And when the Congressional Budget Office warned that the 1982 budget deficit could be $20 billion higher than Reagan's projections, Reagan nearly lost his temper, calling the CBO's projections "phony." And yet that $20 billion projection was based on only three assumptions: that inflation will be .6 percent higher, unemployment .4 percent higher, and the cost of borrowing 4.4 percent higher than Reagan anticipates.

To drive home the point, just look at the predictions made at various times for the size of the 1982 budget. In January 1979, the Carter administration's long-range budget outlook projected that the 1982 budget would be $615 billion. By January 1980, the prediction was $686 billion. In January 1981, the new estimate was about $740 billion—and in late February that estimate was revised upward.

And it is not just budget predictions that are so far off. Last year, the Federal Reserve Board announced that, in a single week, it has miscounted the money supply by $3.5 billion, or by $800 million, or by both in separate errors. How can the Fed's governors control the money supply, when they don't even know what it is? While the "experts" pretend to make projections and fine-tune the budget, the plain fact is *they don't know what they are doing.*

Taxation and inflation

The Reagan program for tax reductions is not in much better shape. The centerpiece of this is the Kemp-Roth proposal for a 10 percent cut in tax rates every year for three years, the program Reagan campaigned on. It now looks as if the cuts will be scheduled to go into effect on July 1 rather than January 1, making them in effect 5 percent in 1981, 15 percent in 1982, and 25 percent in 1983, rather than the 10-20-30 original proposal. Nevertheless, the effect would be the same after 1983, and this would be a significant tax cut if we were really going to get it. But there's a big difference between cutting taxes and cutting tax rates, especially in inflationary times.

Take the case of an average married American taxpayer making $20,000 a year. The newspapers have told us that the taxpayer would save $292 if he got a 10 percent tax rate cut. But in fact he will have to make $22,400 next year just to keep up with inflation, using a realistic inflation rate of 12 percent. And while it doesn't give him any more buying power than he had the previous year, that cost-of-living raise will nevertheless push him into a higher tax bracket. The effect of inflation will more than offset the tax rate cut, and instead of saving $292, he will actually pay $242 *more* than he did the year before. He will pay less, of course, than he would have without the rate cut, but he will not pay less than he had paid before. For the economy as a whole, as a general rule, each 1 percent increase in inflation means a 1.6 percent increase in income tax revenues.

Reagan's tax cut proposal is based on supply-side economic theory. Simply stated, supply-siders argue that if marginal tax rates are lowered, thus increasing take-home pay and return on investments, individuals will work and save more in response to the increased return for their effort. And—the real point—tax revenues will increase. Thus, they say, it makes sense for government to lower tax rates in order to maximize tax revenues. But is this the point to which conservatives have sunk, that they want to maximize the amount of money that can be stolen from the taxpayers?

But even leaving aside the morality of these appalling goals, we may question whether the supply-siders' proposal will work.Lower tax rates will, of course, produce at least some increased effort and investment. But there is no convincing evidence that it will work quickly or for all groups of taxpayers. Some taxpayers, for instance, may decide that they can maintain their standard of living by working slightly *less* after a tax rate cut. In short, we cannot be sure that tax rates are presently above the rate at which tax revenue is maximized.

If we are below that point—or if the Laffer curve is not as simple a curve as Laffer himself would have us believe—government revenue may not increase after the rate cuts. Then what will Reagan do?

Finally, investment and production take time. Even if increased incentives do lead to increased investment and work, it will take some time for these to be reflected in the economy, and the time-lag between rate cuts and increased revenues may be longer than Reagan anticipates.

The Reagan tax program is simply not enough. The economy is in disastrous shape, as he acknowledges, and it will not be saved by these weak reforms. We need massive tax cuts for both individuals and business to revitalize the economy and to give back to people the right to spend the fruits of their own labor. We won't get them from the Reagan administration.

Money and the Fed

Let us now consider the President's "commitment to a monetary policy that will restore a stable currency and healthy financial markets." A few years ago, we thought 3 percent inflation was too much. President Ford was defeated in part because of a 1976 inflation rate of 5 percent. But now a President elected in large part because of his pledge to stop inflation tells us that inflation can only be reduced to 6

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percent in five years.

Inflation is caused by the Federal Reserve Board's expansion of the money supply. The Fed, of course, is an independent agency, and the President can't control it directly. He can, however, influence it significantly. Reagan has expressed his support for the Fed's current policies — the policies that have given us double-digit inflation for several years now. He states his hope that the growth rates of money and credit can be gradually reduced from their 1980 levels to one-half that level by 1986. M3 increased by about 9 percent during 1980, so Reagan hopes to bring that increase down to 4.5 percent by 1986. Such a policy would guarantee continued inflation, perhaps not at quite such high levels as in recent years but still at levels that are quite significant.

But bad as rising prices are, they are not the worst consequence of inflation. Inflation distorts relative prices in the economy, leading to massive malinvestments—investments in the wrong things. And it causes a equally massive redistribution of wealth and other distortions in the economy through huge government subsidies given to some firms and industries, and paid for by inflation. These subsidies keep inefficient firms alive and thriving, while more efficient firms fail or are never created. Jobs in the efficient sector of the economy are destroyed, and consumers are deprived of the benefit of efficient, productive firms. This effect will hardly be changed by reducing the rate of inflation, even to 6 percent. It will only be ended by stopping inflation cold.

It is not true, as popular mythology would have it, that federal deficits *per se* cause inflation. Nevertheless, there is a connection. Deficits have to be made up somehow. There are really only two choices—borrowing or monetizing the debt. If the debt is made up by borrowing, private borrowers are crowded out of the capital market and are unable to get loans for projects like homebuilding or business expansion. If some of the debt is made up through monetization, that is, by printing more money, inflation results. Since the government wants to avoid driving interest rates up by excessive borrowing, it almost always resorts to at least some inflation to cover its deficits.

The Reagan plan actually proposes a larger deficit in 1982 than the Carter administration had projected. So it is highly unlikely that the pressures on the government to expand the money supply will be reduced.

Stopping inflation, of course, will ultimately take more than a balanced budget. Federal deficits are only one incentive for inflation. The fact is that we will have inflation as long as we have a fractional-reserve, paper-money system controlled by the Federal Reserve. We will only stop inflation when we move toward a sound currency. It is true that this could be done temporarily if the Fed ceased to buy assets on the open market—that is, ceased to create new money. But what is the point of having a central bank and *then* trying to prevent it from doing what central banks do? The real solution is to abolish the Fed and move to a gold standard, or better yet a system of competitive currencies chosen in the marketplace. Clearly we won't get any such policies from the Reagan administration, and so we can't expect inflation to be significantly reduced.

The Achilles heel

Defense spending is not listed by the administration as part of its economic program. Yet the military budget may prove to be the Achilles heel of the whole plan.

Astute observers may have noted that the Republicans seem to have defined the Pentagon out of the federal government. Commentators report that the administration plans to cut "every department of government," then a few paragraphs later note that the Defense Department will get billions more. This is a common misunderstanding among conservatives, who seem to believe that the military is not part of the hated federal government. But it *is* part of the government, and Reagan plans to make it a bigger and bigger part.

While he is trying to reduce Carter's spending projections in most other areas, Reagan is dramatically increasing the proposed military budget. Defense spending is scheduled to increase to $185 billion in 1982, and it will soar to $336 billion in 1986. In only five years the administration plans to spend $1.3 *trillion* on the military. Since some 60 to 70 percent of the military budget actually goes to defend other countries, this means that American taxpayers will spend at least $775 billion over the next five years on the defense of other nations. This works out to about $15,000 for a family of four. Should this go unquestioned?

Like most conservatives, Reagan is at least somewhat skeptical of the claims made by bureaucrats. He understands that government agencies always demand more money than they need to carry out the tasks they have been assigned. But, again like other conservatives, he never applies this same skepticism to the Pentagon. He has stated that the only way to know how much to spend on the military is to ask the experts—that is, the military.

Defense spending may blow the whole Reagan program. If Congress doesn't give him all his domestic spending cuts but does go along with the military increases, the deficit—already large at $55 billion in 1981 and $45 billion in 1982 — could increase dramatically. And, of course, if Reagan gets us into a war in El Salvador, a possibility that can't be ruled out, all the budget plans will be blown sky-high. As during the war in Vietnam, we'll have huge spending increases, higher taxes, and soaring inflation. What will the free-market conservatives do then, faced with another choice between fighting communism in a country of absolutely no strategic importance and cutting the budget as they had planned?

All in all, the Reagan economic program is a modest improvement over Carter. It projects slight reductions in the rate of increase of taxes and spending, certainly an improvement over an administration that raised taxes and spending in real terms by 25 percent in four years. Nevertheless, it will not cure any of the real ills of the American economy.

One positive thing the Reagan election and administration are producing, however, is a new atmosphere in Washington and in the major media. It is now acceptable to talk about cutting the budget. Major publications debate by how much the government should be reduced. That is at least a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, the failure of the Reagan program may change all that. We will be told that "we tried free enterprise, and it didn't work." It is therefore vitally important that a major effort be made—both with the national media and in every city and town—to make every American realize that Reagan's program is not free enterprise. It will not really lower the tax burden. It will not stop inflation or put Americans back to work. And it is not going to get government out of our lives. ❑

David Boaz is Policy Analyst for the Cato Institute in San Francisco. He was Research Director for the Ed Clark for President campaign in 1980, and headed the study group which produced Clark's "White Paper on Tax and Spending Reduction."

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Washington's BIGGEST Budget Cutter

No, it's not David Stockman or any other member of the Reagan administration. It's a liberal Democrat from the state of Wisconsin.

AN LR INTERVIEW

SAM HALTOM

It's no news to anyone familiar with the record that Ronald Reagan is more talk than performance when it comes to budget cutting and tax cutting. As governor of California, he talked incessantly about tax reduction and the need to cut back government, while at the same time presiding over one of the greatest periods of government growth in California history—a period in which the per capita tax rate more than doubled. And his first few months in the White House have lent precious little credence to the assertion that *this* time he will do what he says. Already, the tax cuts he promised during the 1980 campaign have been transformed into reductions in the rate at which he'll *raise* our taxes. And his much-vaunted commitment to "that government which governs least" has been transformed into proposals for enormous increases in our "defense" budget and enormous bailouts for the Chrysler Corporation.

But even those to whom none of this is either new or surprising, even the most diehard of Reagan critics might be startled to learn that neither Reagan nor any other of the various conservative Republicans now associated with him politically has piled up a tax-cutting or budget-cutting record even remotely comparable to the one piled up in the Senate over the past two decades and more by a liberal Democrat named William Proxmire.

Proxmire was elected to the Senate in August of 1957, in a special election held to fill the unexpired term of the notorious Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin who died that year. And Proxmire quickly let it be known that he was a horse of an entirely different color from his predecessor. Where McCarthy had led a kind of Inquisition against domestic communists, Proxmire was a staunch believer in freedom of speech. Where McCarthy was a big spender, particularly on agriculture and housing, Proxmire was one of the most parsimonious fellows the Senate had ever seen. And he remains so to this day.

Proxmire contends that the government squanders at least $1 of every $6 it spends and that one of the most outrageous cases in point is the Defense Department, which, he points out, now employs at least a million people—not counting military personnel—more than all the other government agencies combined. Proxmire devoted the second of his five books entirely to this problem, and called it *Report from Wasteland: America's Military-Industrial*

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Complex. He devoted an entire chapter of his latest book, *The Fleecing of America* (1980), to the same problem.

But he doesn't think the military has a monopoly on waste. He also takes on government welfare programs for giant corporations. "Last year," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in mid-1980, "there were 6,000 firms that went under and we bailed out only Chrysler. All the others were allowed to go down and we should have let them. If you don't, you maintain incompetent management producing things people don't want."

And Proxmire doesn't think government waste stops there, either. He finds it all over the place. In 1975, he began presenting a monthly award for the "the biggest or most ridiculous or most ironic example of government waste" during the preceding 30 days. Since then his Golden Fleece Awards have become virtually an American institution, with recipients coming from every walk of bureaucracy. Early this year, for example, the Golden Fleece Award went to President Reagan's Inaugural Committee for spending $4 million of the taxpayer's money on hidden costs of the supposedly privately funded absurd fanfaronade of the President's descent into office.

Most important of all, Proxmire practices what he preaches. He not only talks economy in government, he consistently votes for it. Ask the National Taxpayers Union, which annually rates all members of Congress according to the very simple standard of how they voted on bills which require the raising and squandering of tax money. In each of the last three Congresses, Proxmire has come out with the best record of any member of either House. And he doesn't believe in squandering money on his own campaigns, either. He spent a total of $177.50 on his re-election campaign in 1976—just enough to have his nomination papers printed and buy stationery and stamps to return the unsolicited contributions he'd received. And he won 73 percent of the vote, carrying every county in the state.

Proxmire is no libertarian, of course—his objection to the Libertarian Party is its opposition to New Deal programs like Social Security, government funded medical care, and aid to the unemployed, which he regards as "essential...so that the whole economy doesn't snowball downhill."

We at *LR* reasoned that our readers might like to get better acquainted with the liberal Democrat who can outcut Ronald Reagan any day of the week. So we sent frequent *LR* contributor Tom Hazlett to Proxmire's Capitol Hill office for some candid conversation about how the anti-Big Government movement has fared in the three years since passage of California's Proposition 13, and what lies ahead.

LR: Do you think the Proposition 13 spirit is still alive and kicking? Or do you think the politicians are relaxing and the spirit's on the wane?

Proxmire: It's alive and kicking—though Proposition 13, of course, was a particular proposal in protest against a specific tax, the property tax. The property tax is even more unpopular than the income tax. The reaction of people in California to the property tax is the kind of reaction you get all over the country.

LR: You're probably in as good a position as anyone to see the national ramifications of Proposition 13. What are they?

Proxmire: As I said, it was a protest against a local tax, locally imposed. But we have the property tax all over the country; it's a national tax in that sense—though it's not imposed by the federal government, of course. I think it does indicate, however, that people are concerned with the high level of taxation generally. Very concerned with it. Willing to give up services. Willing to give up a number of things in order to reduce the tax burden.

LR: But over the past three years government seems to have continued to grow. From the view here in Washington, have there really been any substantial cuts?

Proxmire: Congress has not done very well. But then, the momentum behind this spending is just terrific. A great deal of it, an overwhelming amount that is spent, is literally uncontrollable from year to year. You have to go back and repeal the original tax to stop it. And much of the rest is extraordinarily popular because so many people directly benefit from it. For instance, the biggest spending other than national defense is for Social Security benefits which go to some 36 million people. In my state there are 600,000 people on Social Security, and almost all of them are voters. There's no way you can cut that, let alone eliminate it, without just virtually having a revolution on your hands.

And many other costs of the federal government are considered essential by most people. Right now, there appears to be a majority sentiment for increasing defense spending. And however people feel about comprehensive national health insurance, they favor Medicare and they favor Medicaid, both extraordinarily expensive. Aid for education? People hear it and they stand up and salute. They're all for federal aid to education, higher education as well as elementary and secondary education. It's very popular. These programs have a colossal amount of steam, popularity, and momentum behind them. And to hold them down at a time when you have such inflation that if you're just going to maintain their real level, you have to make a nominal increase—if you have a 10 percent inflation, you've got to make a 10 percent increase—it's extraordinarily hard. But except for defense, the other elements of the budget have been held to at least the level of the inflation or, in many cases, somewhat less than that.

LR: And that's been the real effect so far at the federal level of the tax revolt?

Proxmire: I think so. But there are some indications that Congress may break out of that mood. For example, there's a whale of a lot of sentiment now for what is called re-industrialization. Re-industrialization means all kinds of things, but mainly it means bailouts, including such things as loan guarantees, loans, refundable tax credits, and any number of other provisions for assisting industry to compete with international competitors. Subsidies of various kinds — and substantial subsidies. An aggregate amounting to tens of billions of dollars. This program is supported as vigorously by Republicans as by Democrats. Maybe more so. Many business people support it, and *Business Week* had a big editorial spread saying that they're all for it. This is going to be a colossal program.

I think that re-industrialization is a very, very bad idea. There is no way we can get into it, *letting* the government get bigger, without the effect of it being that we're going to have higher taxes and more interference by government. There's no question in my mind that the federal government's become so big, so burdensome, that there's no way we can have fundamental freedoms with the size government we have. I think we just *have* to slow down the increase in the size of government. I do not favor, for example, repealing Social Security or knocking out any of the basic New Deal programs, but I do favor sharply reducing and holding them down. Then, if we cannot get the cost of the federal government below 20 percent of the gross na-

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tional product, I think we ought to take a hard look at repealing some of our programs. Some programs I would favor repealing are revenue sharing, the Small Business Administration, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. I think I would abolish the Department of Education. I don't think the Department of Energy was necessary. I think it would be good thing if the President and the Congress would resolve together that they would abolish a major department every year and a minor agency every month. And never create a new agency without abolishing an old one.

LR: Was there any one event or series of events that made you a tax cutter?

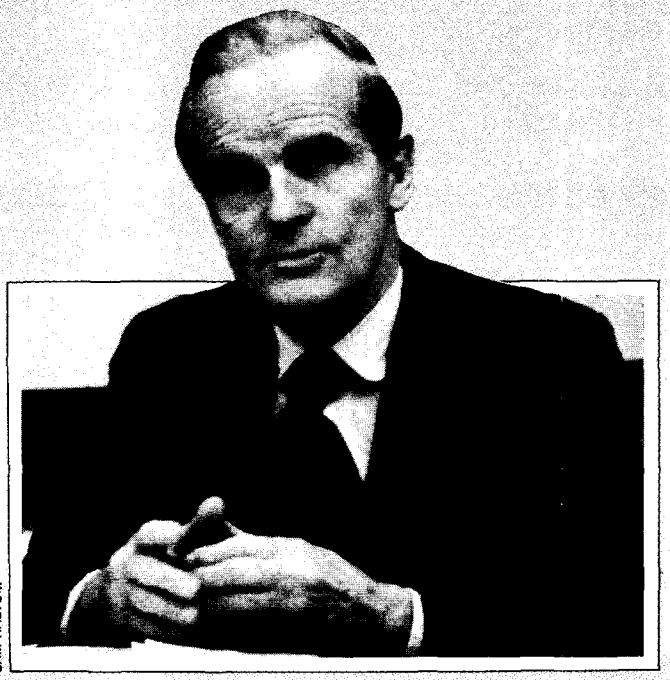
Proxmire: No, I've always believed in economy and in economic operation. Back in 1958, when I'd only been here a year and was running for re-election, I was called "Billion Bucks Bill," which I thought was a very, very erroneous and false accusation. I was called that by a Congressman, fortunately, not by my opponent in the campaign. So I challenged him to a debate on it, and we debated it several times in the state. All the attention was on him and on me, not on my opponent, which worked out for the best.

LR: The optimal situation.

Proxmire: Right: But what my opponent in the debates did—my opponent was John Burns, a ranking Republican member of the Ways and Means Committee—his charge was that I favored reducing taxes and by reducing taxes, that would increase the deficit, and therefore that's just like spending. So he took the billions of dollars of tax reductions unfortunately few and far between. And Republicans are just as bad as Democrats, or worse. People like Goldwater and Tower don't have as good records as you might expect, because they favor spending money in their states and on public works, and also they favor spending money on space and also, especially, on defense. Harry Byrd has a pretty good record. So does Bill Roth.

LR: In your book *The Fleecing of America* you point out that one problem you face if you want to control spending is getting information from federal agencies. I recall now an instance where the Air Force had a big party in Las Vegas, and when they were asked for certain records, they simply lied or would not supply them. How can you discipline, how can you have some accountability in these agencies if there's no way to really get the facts?

Proxmire: It's very hard. And one of the reasons it is hard is because those who do have the spirit and the sense of loyalty to the country to blow the whistle are drummed right out of government. They find out in a hurry that they don't get any reward. The classic example is Ernie Fitzgerald, of course. He's the man who blew the whistle on the C-5-A, the biggest overrun, up to that time, in the history of our country. Two billion dollars on one weapons system. The year before that, he'd gotten an award as the outstanding weapons analyst in the Air Force: the biggest award they could give, the highest award they could give a civilian. And as soon as he testified—and he very reluctantly testified—to the overrun, as soon as I specified the figure and he said "Yes," he felt that perhaps that was correct—he couldn't say anything else without lying—they took him off weapons



SAM HALTOM

that I favored, and said that's like adding to spending. It was just a ridiculous charge. And in the course of those debates, I became identified to some extent as one who favored holding down spending.

LR: Are there others like you, on either side of the aisle?

Proxmire: You mean who favor holding down spending?

LR: Yes.

Proxmire: Well, there aren't many who have to be accused of holding down spending. That's a pity. There's

analysis and put him on analysis of a twenty-lane bowling alley in Thailand and did everything else they could to discourage him. Finally they fired him the next year. He fought his being kicked out. He won, as you know, in the courts, and he's had a very rough time ever since.

LR: Were you aware of what was happening to him at the time, because he had testified before your committee?

Proxmire: Oh yes, and I did all I could to help him. The astonishing thing was that this was an entirely bipartisan persecution. In the beginning he was kicked around by the Johnson administration. Then Nixon came in and kicked

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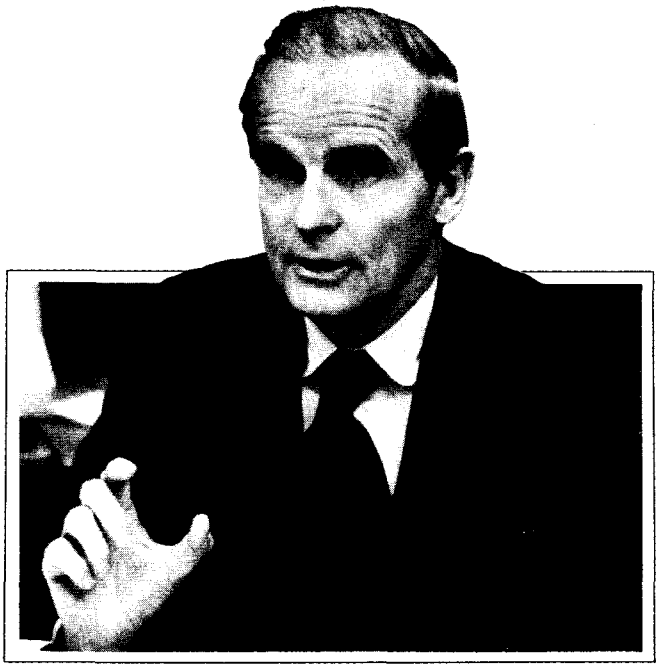
him around. Then Ford came in and gave him the same treatment. Then Carter came in, and that was the worst of it. Carter campaigned on the entire Ernie Fitzgerald case, by name. He specifically said that people like this were going to be rewarded. Well, when he came in, it was the same old story. Fitzgerald was not given anything substantial to do. He was still criticized, demoted, demeaned, and so forth. And I called up the President. I reminded him of his pledge. I said, "If Fitzgerald doesn't have any future in the Defense Department, why not appoint him to a position on the Federal Trade Commission or in one of the other commissions? He's a man of great ability, and deeply concerned with economy, and he'd acquit himself well." But the President wasn't willing to do one single thing for him.

After they tried to fire him from the Air Force, I demanded that the Attorney General bring charges against the people in the Air Force who'd gone after him, for violation of a provision in the law that prohibits the administration from taking any adverse action against anyone for this testimony before a Congressional Committee. And it was a clear, bare, obvious violation of that law, and the Attorney General wouldn't take any action at all. I got up on the floor of the Senate every single month. I got up on a particular day of the month, month after month for a number of months, saying, "Now so many months have gone by and the Attorney General has failed to act." But it did no good.

LR: In *The Fleecing of America,* you say that after long hours of painstakingly picking out the fat, you were, with Senator Roth, able to eliminate a grand total of $1.3 billion from the 1979 budget, which is certainly, in the total scheme of things, a drop in the bucket.



Proxmire: Frankly, if you're going to get an effective reduction, you just have to have the vigorous—and I mean *vigorous*—cooperation of the Executive Branch. You have to have the President really on your side, because the forces on the other side are just so overwhelming. You go into an Appropriations subcommittee meeting, which is where the decisions are really made—they're not made so much on the floor, because the floor will take whatever the subcommittee accepts — and you find an absolute bi-partisan thirst to spend the public money.

What happens is that people will come into my office, then the office of every other member of the subcommittee. If it's our subcommittee on housing, the Veteran's Administration, EPA, or whatever, everybody who wants spending will concentrate on the members of the subcommittee. They'll write letters, they'll come to the office, they'll ask for spending. And there'll be no counterweight. There'll be no constituents who come and say "Don't spend money on this thing. It is a waste of money." That case isn't made at all. And the result of that, of course, is that there's a very strong tendency, an almost irresistible tendency, to go along with the spenders.

LR: You don't get any letters opposing specific spending programs? That sounds remarkable; I mean, with your millions of constituents.

Proxmire: I get some, but very few.

LR: Is that changing? You make a specific appeal for such letters in your book. Are you starting to get this reaction?

Proxmire: Still very little. I get some. I get a few letters, two or three letters a day; three or four letters a day, sometimes. But we get a *thousand* letters a day.

LR: What's your prognosis for the future? On the front door to your office you have a chart on productivity, indicating that the United States' increase in worker productivity is the lowest of any of the major industrial countries. "Read it and weep," as it says. What is the solution to that problem?

Proxmire: The solution is going to take some time, but I think it depends on getting more investment. You have to get more investment; you have to find a way to encourage people to save money. With inflation what it is and interest rates what they are, people are much less inclined to save. One way you could *increase* that incentive is to provide for a tax break for income derived from savings. I favor that very strongly. I also favor a great increase in the incentives for reinvestment. I favor elimination of the corporate income tax. I think that's double taxation and I think abolishing it would result in a number of things. One, increase in cash flow, of course, for corporations. Number two, it would eliminate the featherbedding that is very com-

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monplace in American industry. Corporations buy all kinds of things; they buy yachts and jets and cars for their employees, and so forth. What the dickens, the federal government gets half their profits anyway. If that weren't the case, if they had to pay for it all, you could find a great deal more reluctance about easy, wasteful spending on the part of the corporations.

LR: Even Lester Thurow, in his latest book, comes out in favor of doing away with the corporate income tax. He also comes out in favor of abolition of environmental regulations. He argues for pollution taxes instead.

Proxmire: I favor that too. It's worked very well in West Germany, for example.

LR: Tell us about that.

Proxmire: They have the Ruhr River, which is the most intensely used by industry in the world. They've got coal, paper, chemicals, everything. Any body of water that's used so much should be polluted. Yet you can sail on the water of the Ruhr River, you can swim in it; you can drink it. Why? Because they have a pollution tax, and if you pollute that stream you've got to pay the tax.

The difficulty here in America is that water is a free good and you can run off all you want for nothing. You can also pollute the air; that's a free good. But if you charged the people for air pollution and for water pollution, things would be different. We can do it now. We have the technological capacity. And we don't need the kind of artificial and often very inefficient restrictions that courts have to impose because they really don't understand the problem. Business itself, in order to maximize its profits, will recycle its own wastes, and I think that makes a lot of sense. I think it's the way to go. That way you eliminate the kind of arbitrary and often outdated and improper regulation that we've now got. Business regulates itself. The air and water get cleaner and stay cleaner. And government gets smaller.

LR: Senator, what is your reaction to the Reagan budget cuts? Generally, do you think they've gone far enough, or too far in some areas?

Proxmire: Well, in general, I think the Reagan budget cuts are certainly in the right direction. They're not enough; not deep enough. You can see that, because we don't have a balanced budget. We end up with an unbalanced budget this year, next year, the year after—there's a vague notion that there *may* be a balanced budget in 1984, but everything will have to break right. And on the basis of all of our experience, it's likely we will *not* have a balanced budget—so, we need to cut more deeply.

I think that, for instance, we should eliminate revenue sharing; it would save $4.5 billion. We should cut out many of the water projects in the West. (It's understandable that this administration, where the President comes from the West and has a constituency in the West, would be concerned about that.) I think we can cut down on our aid for the cities more than the President has recommended—for example, the assistance for transportation. They're eliminating the fare subsidy, but I think they should cut into the subsidies for buses and so forth. All these things are programs you can justify, to some extent, but they're programs we can't afford, and we just have to say no.

LR: So to you, achieving a balanced budget would be the most important thing?

Proxmire: Well, I wouldn't say achieving a balanced budget; I think running surpluses. I think we have to reduce the national debt. We now have a situation where we have a national debt of $935 billion—it will be $985 billion by next fall.

I was one of the few who voted against the increase in the debt limit. And I think, if the President had dug in his heels and said, "*No* increase in the debt limit," we would have balanced the budget—we would have *had* to balance the budget—this year. And I think that the President then could have held that position, because he would have had a veto over any increase in debt limit, and it would have been clear that in order to provide for some of the necessities that have to be met we would simply have to make cuts, with no ifs, ands, or buts. And they would have been made, and made in a hurry.

People wonder why you have very, very high interest rates. It's very easy. You have almost a trillion-dollar national debt, with an average maturity of less than a year, so the federal government has to borrow that trillion dollars all over again every year. That has a *dynamic* effect on the credit markets and drives interest rates up through the roof. And if you talk to people in construction, or the automobile business—or almost anything—they'll tell you that what's really killing them is not inflation as much as it is high interest rates. It's just very difficult for our economy to grow under those circumstances. That's why I think it's desperately important that we reduce the size of that debt. So I think that we should balance the budget this year and run surpluses in the future.

We could start off with a balanced budget and a modest surplus even though the government spending increases—slightly. Because we have an enormous increase in revenue. *Then* we can start reducing taxes, once we get the government debt under control. But I think that has to come first. I believe in cutting taxes; I think one way you cut spending is to cut taxes. If the revenue's not available, it won't be spent—if at the same time, you can limit the increase in the national debt.

LR: As a practical matter, to what extent do you think that the proposed Reagan cuts as they are now can get through Congress?

Proxmire: People view them as very, very deep, but I think it's possible. Because we have, as you know, a Budget Reform Act, which now requires an overall budget target for the Congress, and members of the House and Senate have to stand up and be counted on whether they would go over the President's request, or meet the President's request, or go under it. And I think politically it would be very ill-advised, these days, for Senators to say that they want to spend more money than the President proposes. And the overall vote is an easier vote than, say, to vote to cut school lunch, or to cut some other program that's popular.

LR: So you think there's a chance of getting at least what Reagan is proposing as the cuts?

Proxmire: I think there is, and I think he's wise to put a cap—he has a $695 billion cap—on spending, and I think that's good. I'd like to see it lower. I'd like to see a cap of $685 billion; I think that would be practical.

LR: Could Reagan have proposed even greater cuts?

Proxmire: Yes. The way to have proposed those greater cuts, as I say, was to say, "No increase in the debt limit." If he had done that, then you would automatically have had deeper cuts than he proposes, much deeper. He didn't do that, and I think now it's hard, practically, to get much deeper cuts than he proposes.

LR: Thank you, Senator Proxmire. ❑

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"It was like living in a libertarian society; a week of it might just last me till next year."

—Vivian Wadlin
Highland, New York

Whether you have only just discovered libertarianism's rich history or you want a chance to develop and integrate your knowledge of liberty, you could be one of the people who will spend eight days on a beautiful college campus with the major authorities on the emerging economic and political freedom. Information is now available on the selection of applicants for the Cato Institute's 1981 Summer Seminars in Political Economy.

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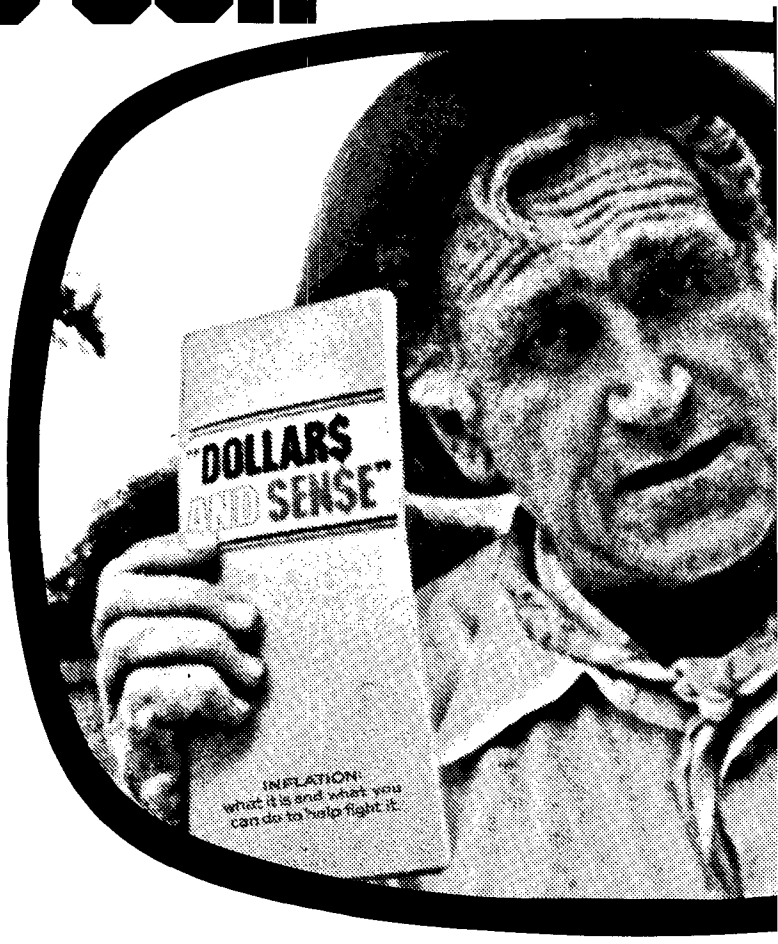
ABUSING OUR DOLLAR$ AND SEN$E

CHRIS HOCKER

DON'T LET INFLATION BLOW IT!
Use your "Dollars and Sense."
Write for this free booklet, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.
DOLLARS AND SENSE
Ad Council
A public service message of The Advertising Council and The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor and Treasury. Presented by this magazine.



You've probably seen the ad on TV: actor James Whitmore, recreating his stage role as Will Rogers, is strolling around our nation's capital, scratching his head and wondering out loud what to do about the problem of inflation. As a good place to start, he suggests writing to Pueblo, Colorado and asking for a free copy of a booklet called *Dollars and Sense*. He concludes, "We can all beat inflation — if we just use our dollars and sense."

Where do ads like this come from? Who thinks them up? How much do they cost, and who pays for them? And what does the pamphlet *Dollars and Sense* have to say about inflation?

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Who is responsible for ads like this, and what does *Dollars and Sense* say about inflation?

Getting the answers to these questions turned out to be an unexpectedly involved process. The investigative trail led from corporate board rooms to government offices and back again, ultimately leading, in a somewhat surprising twist, to the doorstep of one James Earl Carter, thirty-ninth President of the United States, and his Council of Economic Advisers.

To start at the beginning, if you write to Pueblo, Colorado you'll eventually receive, via third class bulk mail, a copy of *Dollars and Sense* along with the Consumer Information catalog for the current season. The catalog lists well over a hundred titles of pamphlets you can get from the Consumer Information Center of the General Services Administration of the U.S. government, titles like *Safe Brown Bag Lunches* and *Dwarf Fruit Trees* and *Hemorrhoid Treatments Reviewed,* but if you're not really interested in those, if you want to find out about inflation, you start reading *Dollars and Sense.*

The booklet, subtitled "Inflation: what it is and what you can do to help fight it," is a slim, cartoon-illustrated eight-pager written in question-and-answer format. The first question it addresses, logically enough, is, "What is inflation?"

The answer is: "Inflation is a rise in the general level of prices you pay for everything you buy."

A bell rings in your brain. Wait a minute, aren't higher prices a *result* of inflation? Isn't there something else which is actually inflation, something having to do with the money supply?

You go to the dictionary. Sure enough, *Webster's New Twentieth Century* defines inflation as "an increase in the amount of currency in circulation, resulting in a relatively sharp and sudden fall in its value and rise in prices." Another bell rings in your brain. The federal government has the sole power to create currency, so therefore the federal government must have something to do with its increase, which is inflation. So, whoever wrote *Dollars and Sense* has it wrong from the start. Who's responsible for this thing, anyway?

The inside front cover of *Dollars and Sense* tells you that it was prepared "as a voluntary service by Compton Advertising, Inc. for the Advertising Council. It was written in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, and Treasury."

Oh. Then it's not really a government document. Except that the government sent it to you—it says so right on the envelope. You try to think back to what Will Rogers said on the TV ad. He didn't say anything about who's responsible for the pamphlet; he just told you to write to Pueblo, Colorado. Okay then, who's responsible for Will Rogers?

"From the same wonderful folks . . ."

Several years ago, a book about the advertising industry titled *From The Same Wonderful Folks Who Brought You Pearl Harbor* hit the best seller lists. The title referred to an adman's proposed theme for a campaign to advertise Japanese appliances, but in an ironic way it could be applied to the Advertising Council.

The Advertising Council came into existence right after the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor. In 1941, leaders of the advertising industry, concerned about their "huckster" image, had discussed forming an organization to prove that Madison Avenue had a public spirit. After the Zeroes hit Hawaii, the head of the government's War Production Board approached the embryonic organization and urged it to use its advertising resources to mobilize the American

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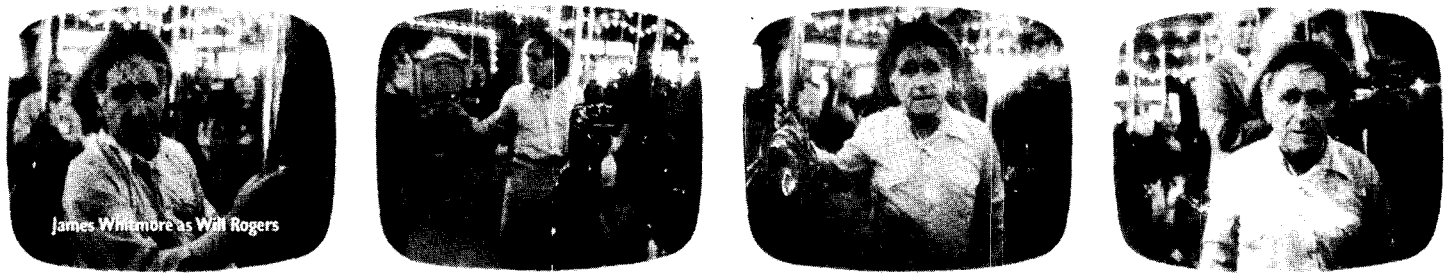

James Whitmore as Will Rogers: "Howdy. I've been moseying around Washington D.C. here, tryin' to find out what our hired help is doing about inflation. Well, I'm pleased to report they're working on it. The trouble with inflation is that you want to holler at somebody about it, but you don't rightfully know who. I mean, it ain't just the government; it ain't just big business or little business, or poor folks or rich folks, it's every single one of us."

public behind the war effort.

At first the Council did little more than encourage its members to induce their clients to sponsor public service ads related to the war — army nurses after the battle, for instance, relaxing with a Camel cigarette. The idea that the ad industry had an interest in being public spirited took hold and expanded, and, years later, the same wonderful folks who brought you victorious Americans in the trenches have more ideas for public service campaigns than they can handle.

The Council bills itself as a "private, non-profit organization that conducts non-commercial and politically non-partisan public service campaigns in the interests of Americans generally," and it is largely responsible for the anti-inflation campaign of Will Rogers and *Dollars and Sense,* as well as the two dozen-or-so other "public service" ads you might see on TV or riding the bus — the ones encouraging you to join a carpool or to "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute."

According to Collingwood Harris, Vice President and Director of the Washington office of the Advertising Council, the Council gets three or four hundred campaign suggestions per year, from government, business, labor, and "from out of left field. "Of these, the Council selects only three or four to become part of a stable of roughly 25 public service campaigns going on at any given time. Of the 25, about half have the U.S. government as the client.

Harris lists four basic criteria which the Council uses to screen suggestions: "They must be non-commercial, non-partisan, non-political, and not designed to influence legislation."

Once the actual work on a public service campaign is done—the copy written, the posters and pamphlets printed, the print media advertising prepared, and the audio and video tapes in the can—the Council distributes them free of charge to television and radio stations, newspapers and magazines, and holders of outdoor advertising space for them to run as a Public Service Announcement (PSA). The various media donate the advertising time or space, and they consider the fact that the Ad Council has distributed them to mean that the PSA's are pre-screened and "OK." Many radio and television stations are under the incorrect impression that they are required to air PSA's to satisfy legal requirements of the Federal Communications Act. There are no such requirements, but thousands of PSA's air every day, all over the country, for free.

The Council itself rarely gets involved in the actual concept or the physical creation of a particular campaign; rather, it functions as a screener of ideas, a liaison between the client and the individual agency doing the work, a distributor of the finished product to media outlets, and a promoter of the advertising industry as a whole. The Council gets its money from several private sources, the lion's share of contributions coming from the American Association of Advertising Agencies, which has kept the right to choose which individual agency will handle each public service account.

The agencies want these accounts. In a mannerly way, they'll compete for them with other agencies. They consider a public service account to be a prestige item, and they'll work long hours and commit their full resources to these campaigns. More often than not, top executives in the agency are given the responsibility for making the campaign a success.

The tangible reward for all this dedication is virtually nothing. The agencies aren't paid for their creative skills, their time, or the extensive market research surveys they conduct for these campaigns. There is no apparent link between their public service work and the promise of other, paid work from the same client in the future. They do get reimbursed for "out-of-pocket" expenses—film crews and editors needed for the TV ads, for instance—and they do get a small mention in the credits of whatever publication might be part of the campaign. And that's about all.

Fighting inflation for Jimmy

The Advertising Council's Anti-Inflation campaign with *Dollars and Sense* wasn't instigated by one of the usual sources. The idea for it came in a letter purportedly written and certainly signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1978. "Many Americans now recognize inflation as our most serious domestic problem," Carter's letter read in part. "An effective public service campaign does not have to embrace a particular solution, because there is no one solution. But it can make people far more conscious of the part they play in the inflationary spiral, and enlist them in a national effort to do what they can to end it." The letter concluded, "I look forward to working with you on this most important matter."

Collingwood Harris remembers that the reaction from the Council's screening committee was mixed, with some members expressing reservations about the propriety of getting involved in what could be construed as a political issue at the suggestion of a political person. They double-checked the four basic criteria — non-commercial, non-partisan, non-political, and not designed to influence legislation — and, according to Harris, decided that since the Anti-Inflation campaign wouldn't take place during an election year and was "in the public interest," they would go ahead with it.

The account was assigned to Compton Advertising, Inc. of New York City, a large prestigious agency which for sixty

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A public service message of The Advertising Council and The U.S Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor and Treasury. Presented by this station.

"So, if we're gonna get a handle on this inflation thing, we've got to stop waitin' for the other guy and we got to do something ourselves. Something we can all do now is to send for this little, free booklet, "Dollars and Sense." Now just scribble a line to: "Dollars and Sense," Pueblo, Colorado. It'll clear up some of the confusion about this inflation thing. You know, folks, we can lick this inflation thing if we just use our dollars and sense."

years has been promoting,-among other things, Ivory soap and Crisco for Proctor and Gamble. Compton was also the agency responsible for developing the American Economic System (AES) campaign for the Advertising Council in 1976.

The Ad Council itself, in an unusual move, had been the primary client for the American Economic System campaign, although the original idea was suggested by former Secretary of Commerce Frederick Dent, and seed money for research came from the Commerce Department. The AES campaign was—and is; it hasn't officially ended—massive, producing large multi-page full-color booklets and posters which were distributed by major newspapers and throughout the public school system in the United States. Survey research had shown that the majority of Americans knew little or nothing about the American economic system or basic economic concepts; the AES campaign was designed to educate them in the basics of "capitalism," "socialism," "supply and demand," "productivity," and other economic terms. When the Anti-Inflation campaign was approved in 1978 by the Ad Council, it was considered only natural for Compton Advertising to handle this account, too. Compton had done the research on economics; Compton had done the writing and development; Compton was happy to have the account. The two campaigns were kept separate, but overlapping. In charge of the Anti-Inflation account was Tom Dunkerton, a top Compton executive and one of the agency's directors.

The *Dollars and Sense* booklet identifies the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, and Treasury as "cooperating" on the venture, but according to Dunkerton, his client was the White House: "The booklet was reviewed by a number of White House economists, including the President's Council of Economic Advisers. We wrote it to their specifications."

"We're all in it together"

The inescapable conclusion is that "their specifications" were to perpetuate the muddled gibberish about inflation which was characteristic of Jimmy Carter and his predecessors whenever they intoned about the problem. One needn't be a disciple of Ludwig von Mises or Milton Friedman to understand that inflation isn't "rising prices." One need only have access to a standard dictionary of the English language. Only a herculean leap of faith could allow the possibility that defining inflation in terms of its most obvious effect—thus exculpating currency expansion, which is a monopoly power of the federal government—was accidental. Clearly, a government which is engaged in causing inflation has everything to gain from widespread public ignorance of the cause of inflation. In fact, why not go one step further? Why not aggressively market misconceptions about inflation through the good folks at the Ad Council and Compton Advertising? They don't understand inflation either.

Significantly, the preliminary market research conducted by Compton for the Anti-Inflation campaign showed that a plurality — 34 percent — of Americans already placed the blame for inflation squarely on the government, with a segment nearly as large attributing the problem to a combination of government, business, labor, and consumers. The survey also showed that the public's understanding of inflation, even among those who blamed government exclusively, was extremely fuzzy. Opinions on the elements of inflation were diverse, but a consensus position was evident on at least two points: Inflation hurts everyone, and everyone is responsible for doing something about it.

These two points became the anchor for the Anti-Inflation campaign, effectively playing to the preconceptions of the public. James Whitmore's Will Rogers sums up the basic thrust on one of the TV ads:

"The trouble with inflation is that you want to holler at somebody about it, but you don't rightfully know who. I mean, it ain't just the government, it ain't just big business or little business, or poor folks or rich folks. It's every single one of us. So if we're gonna get a handle on this inflation thing, we've got to stop waitin' for the other guy and we got to do something ourselves. Something we can all do now is to send for this little, free booklet, *Dollars and Sense.*"

But when this inflation thing is defined as "rising prices," getting a handle on it ain't that easy, folks. *Dollars and Sense* proceeds from the basic definition to a discussion of what individual Americans can do to fight rising prices, misnamed inflation: show restraint; sacrifice; don't buy what you can't afford; increase productivity; save fuel; moderate wage and price demands; don't vote for any more government regulation or spending than is absolutely necessary. And, oh yes, change our attitudes! If we didn't all expect prices to rise, they wouldn't rise! As the booklet says at one point, "We can't just 'leave it to the government' to fix things for us—because, as we've seen, there are many causes of inflation and some of them the government can't do much about." It's as though the writers at Compton Advertising had been moonlighting as Jimmy Carter's speech-writers—except that much of the wording in *Dollars and Sense* reflects the writing in the American Economic System campaign, developed during the Ford Administration.

Perhaps the most insidious section of *Dollars and Sense* is the one which answers the question, "Who gets hurt by inflation?" The predictable response is that we all do — again, playing to public misconceptions. The problem is, some people *don't* get hurt by inflation, they *benefit* from inflation. Anyone who gets the first use of newly-created currency benefits, because those dollars haven't had a

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chance to be devalued yet. Government is a prime beneficiary of this process, obviously, when it uses the new dollars to pay its debts. Other beneficiaries include large international banks which have extended billions of dollars in loans to other countries who are unable to pay the interest, let alone the principal. This isn't just part of some murky conspiracy theory, complete with the Gnomes of Zurich; Jude Wanniski, not exactly a denizen of the lunatic fringe, writes in the March 2, 1981 *Wall Street Journal* that "banks have a profound vested interest in global inflation. It preserves the illusion of solvency even as debt mushrooms. Where once the international banks were ardent exponents of the gold standard for the dollar, which maintained a reliable unit of account between debtors and creditors, they led the way in the early 1970's in urging a 'floating' dollar."

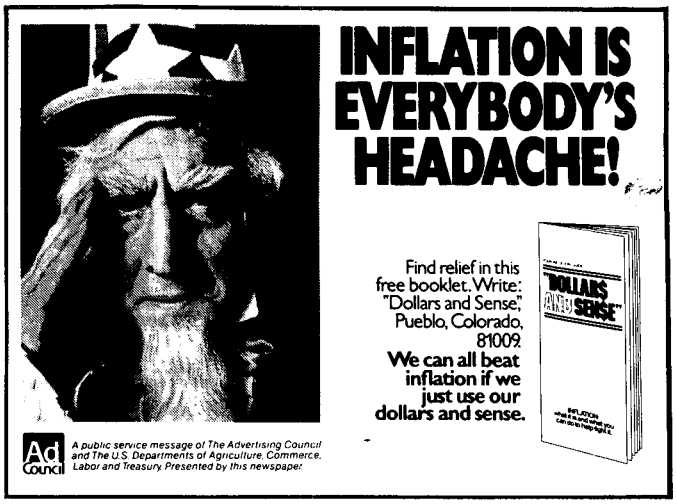
If "every one of us" is hurt by inflation, as *Dollars and Sense* tells us, then why are people in the government so willing to create new currency, and why are other people so willing to spend it? A final question — why aren't these questions raised in *Dollars and Sense?*—isn't as difficult to figure out.

Remembering who the client is

Ironically, it was Will Rogers — the original — who said, "Thank God we don't get all the government we pay for." In the case of the Anti-Inflation campaign, however, we appear to have gotten *more* government than we paid for. Because Compton Advertising did the work for free, TV and radio stations air the ads for free, and the Advertising Council is supported by private contributions, the actual cost to the American taxpayers of the Anti-Inflation campaign, including *Dollars and Sense,* has been about $600,000 spread out over two years. The money went to pay the "out-of-pocket" expenses of the agency and the Council. Six hundred thousand dollars isn't a tiny amount, but compared to a commercial campaign of similar scope it's very inexpensive, and compared to the usual federal budget line item—say, for example, the MX missile—it's negligible. If there ever were a case of "It's not the money, it's the principle of the thing," the Anti-Inflation campaign is it.

And that's really the point. Thanks to the generosity of the advertising industry, the government got a real deal on its effort to confuse Americans about inflation. It's easy enough to criticise *Dollars and Sense* as economic nonsense, which it is, but it's very difficult to make the case that the people at Compton Advertising and the Advertising Council are malicious or inept. They aren't. These are some of the top executives in the industry. From an advertising point of view, their campaign was a success, an attractively-packaged, deftly-promoted, clearly-written, cleverly-illustrated project which apparently achieved its goals. The trouble is that the Ad Council and the agency had one goal, while their client—Jimmy Carter's White House — had quite another.

Collingwood Harris, Tom Dunkerton, and others involved in the advertising side of the campaign all sincerely believe that what they contributed was worthwhile. "The campaign has raised people's consciousness about inflation," says Dunkerton, and others, such as Compton's Director of Market Research, Dr. Paul Moroz, echo that basic theme. Moroz is quick to admit that *Dollars and Sense* is hardly an economics textbook: "Obviously, our ads and the booklet by themselves won't do anything about inflation, but they do make the subject of economics and inflation more salient to the general public." As the President had implied in his letter, the specifics of the anti-inflation message really didn't matter much; since inflation is such a serious problem, and since Americans understand so little about it, anything which even begins to focus attention on the issue is a step in the right direction. Raising the issue, "in the public interest," was the only goal the advertising people wanted to reach — that, and having the prestige of handling a public service account for the President of the United States.


INFLATION IS EVERYBODY'S HEADACHE!
Find relief in this free booklet. Write: "Dollars and Sense," Pueblo, Colorado, 81009.
We can all beat inflation if we just use our dollars and sense.
DOLLARS AND SENSE
Ad Council
A public service message of The Advertising Council and The U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Labor and Treasury. Presented by this newspaper.

They'll concede, however, that helping to put the government's seal of approval on a particular viewpoint about a political issue such as inflation carries the risk of actually damaging the chances of the public gaining a clearer understanding of the issue. "It's close to the line," says Paul Moroz, but he continues, "I'd like to see other people produce booklets giving other points of view about inflation." This would be fine if other people had $600,000 in pocket money, plus the free services of a top advertising agency, plus free air time on radio and TV in major media markets all over the country.

Tom Dunkerton responds a little more pointedly to the idea that the Anti-Inflation campaign carried a political risk: "Remember, the government was our client — and I don't want to go beyond that."

Dunkerton appears to understand, as we all should, that government has a serious purpose behind its sponsorship of these cute, friendly, seemingly innocuous "public service" campaigns, and there is no better case in point than the Anti-inflation campaign. Inflation is a, perhaps *the,* major political issue in the United States; as an issue, it affects the understanding of other major issues such as taxation, unemployment, trade, energy, and foreign policy. It arguably decided the outcome of the 1980 presidential election. Yet the discussion of inflation in *Dollars and Sense* is almost a mockery of any serious attempt to deal with the issue. Could there be any reason other than pure political manipulation for the government to have instigated, approved, and helped to promote this massive exercise in obfuscation?

Jimmy Carter is no longer President, and the Reagan Administration appears not to have noticed the existence of the slim little booklet called *Dollars and Sense.* Since October of 1979, exactly 1,176,100 of the booklets have been printed. As of February 2, 1981, 516,073 had been distributed. That still leaves 660,027 left for individual Americans seeking to know the facts about inflation. Want one? As Will Rogers says, just scribble a line to *Dollars and Sense,* Pueblo, Colorado. ❑

Chris Hocker is publisher of *The Libertarian Review.*

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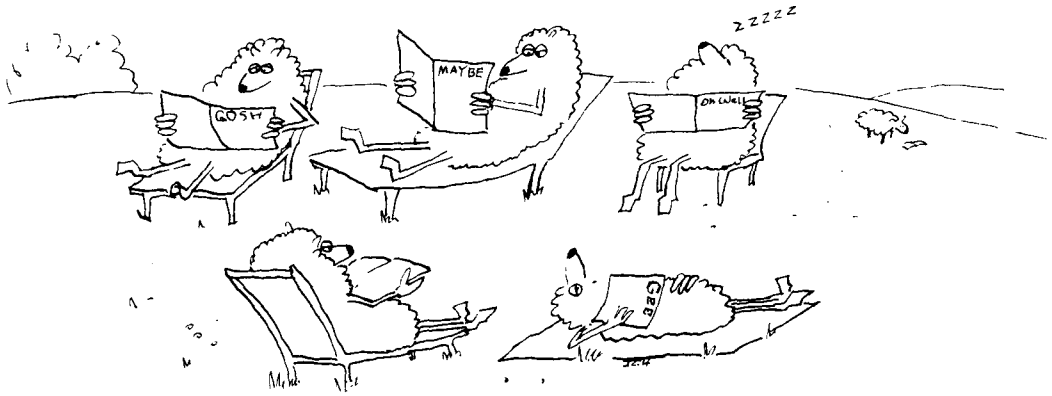
Not Just Anyone Reads LR



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BOOKS AND ARTS

Phyllis Schlafly

This one woman

VICTORIA VARGA

The Sweetheart of the Silent Majority: The Biography of Phyllis Schlafly, *by Carol Felsenthal. Doubleday, 337 pp., $13.95.*

PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY IS A star, a sort of right-wing sex symbol to the hundreds of thousands of women who fear the consequences of the Equal Rights Amendment. She is also controversial and self-contradictory. She believes that women should stay home and raise children (she has raised six), but that in their "spare time" they can also run for Congress (she has run twice) or go to law school (as she did when she was 51, graduating 27th in her class). And in an age when the individual is often considered powerless, Phyllis Schlafly has proven that the opposite can be true: it was she who single-handedly organized the anti-feminist backlash into an army of letter-writers and marchers, who fought the ERA, and succeeded — so far — in preventing its ratification.

These contradictions between Schlafly's anti-feminist positions and the way she has

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managed her own life are what first interested Carol Felsenthal in writing a biography about her. Felsenthal, a feminist and syndicated columnist whose 1977 review of Schlafly's *The Power of the Positive Woman* "blasted the book as 'irrational, contradictory, and simple-minded,'" became intrigued by the overwhelming response that her review produced, a response that seemed designed, not to damn, but to convert. In subsequent researches, she became even more fascinated by the intensity of emotion that Schlafly provokes.

She found that the unquestioning faith that Schlafly's fans place in all her pronouncements is matched only by the hostility and skepticism of her detractors, who question *everything* about her, from her political opinions to how she takes care of her family and her relationship with her husband. In debates, her most articulate opponents are very often reduced to speechless rage. Betty Friedan, in a 1973 debate, yelled, "I'd like to burn you at the stake!" And Birch Bayh, in a subsequent television debate, admitted that she made him want to "commit mayhem live and in color." Her opinions, maddening enough in themselves to feminists, seem to be unbearable when coupled with her absolute self-possession, her obvious intelligence, and her complete command of all the facts on any issue.

(Unfortunately, Schlafly uses her facts very selectively. In a 1979 letter to the *Wall Street Journal,* she stated: "I testified in more than 30 state legislative hearings, and the only state law cited by any ERA proponents as discriminatory to women was a very old, never-enforced law which said that wives cannot make homemade wine without their husband's consent." If it is true that the winemaking law is the only one Schlafly heard cited, which is extremely difficult to believe, it is impossible to think that Mrs. Schlafly does not know of the hundreds of laws that do discriminate on the state level. Joan Kennedy Taylor, in an Association of Libertarian Feminists discussion paper says, "The Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women lists fifteen categories in which 'laws and official practices treat men and women differently.' They include discrimination against married working women by Social Security, several different categories of labor legislation that apply only to women, and various limitations on the rights of married women still lingering from the common law of England; as well as laws mandating longer prison sentences for women than for men convicted of the same crimes." Lawyer Karen DeCrow has devoted an entire book, *Sexist Justice*, to ways in which laws "protect" women from freedom, from advancement, from autonomy. And Schlafly, as a lawyer, must be well aware of these facts.)

The extreme hatred of Schlafly by her opponents convinced Felsenthal that there was a definite need for an objective biography of Phyllis Schlafly. But it took months to persuade Schlafly to cooperate, as she felt she was too young for a biography, and besides, she *had* read Felsenthal's review of her book. And then Felsenthal found it hard to keep her friends when they found out that the book was not to be a hatchet job. "I might as well have admitted I was writing a balanced biography of Yasir Arafat or Adolf Hitler," she says in the preface, but the result is a fascinating and maddening description of the nature and nurture of Phyllis Schlafly.

Born in 1924 in St. Louis, Phyllis Stewart seemed to come into the world smiling, competent, and full of energy. Actually, however, the energy and competence came mostly from her mother. When the Depression hit and her father lost his job, her mother began a full time working career that would hold the family together. And when her two daughters were ready for high school, she took another job in order to pay for their tuition at City House, an academically superior Catholic school. It has been said that Phyllis never forgave her father for being unable to provide for the family. But if this is true, she did love him a great deal nevertheless. And he, in turn, encouraged her to reach for her highest opportunities. Says an uncle, she took to school "like most children take to the circus," and the Mother Superior at City House commented that "She was such a disciplined person, I myself sometimes felt slightly lazy in her presence."

Phyllis emerged from this demanding and very regimented school supremely confident of her abilities. She left the college that had given her a full scholarship, because it wasn't challenging enough, and worked her way through Washington University with a 48 hour a week job test firing ammunition in rifles and machine guns at a munitions factory. A scholarship to Harvard enabled her to complete graduate school, which she did in seven months. Her Harvard professors encouraged her to get a doctorate, but she needed money, and on V-J Day, 1945, she arrived in Washington, D.C. Her first job there, with the government, confirmed her suspicions about the morality of taking the taxpayer's money to do work as a "cog in a clumsy, broken-down Machine," — the federal bureaucracy. So she moved to the private American Enterprise Association (now AEI), where she was forced to learn to type before embarking on her task of educating congressmen on the virtues of free enterprise and writing articles on government overregulation.

After a year in Washington, she moved back to St. Louis, and became the one-woman campaign staff for the election of conservative Claude Bakewell; his win was later attributed to what Felsenthal calls his "smooth, organized, tireless campaign." The election over, she took two bank jobs and edited a financial newsletter. In one issue she wrote (she was then twenty-four):

> Before the meaning of freedom was debased by neo-liberals, freedom and responsibility went hand in hand ... The man of modest means who sends his children to college chooses to skimp and save and sacrifice to do so. The left wing rejects responsibility ... as too harsh ... Freedom under this definition is the freedom to gratify one's desires without making the slightest sacrifice or suffering the slightest inconvenience. Again and again we are told by the left wing that our people are not free: that they are subject to the compulsion of their environment and the circumstances under which they live; that they do not have a chance in life; that they are wage slaves and that they will only be free when the state will give them all they want without effort and without limit.

It was a theme that would show up again and again in her later writing and speeches, including those on the ERA. So what if it's a man's world?, she says in effect. Nothing should, or can, stop any woman from making her own way. And it is easy to see why this sort of argument would enrage leftists. Fred Schlafly, a successful, 39-year-old lawyer, was by no means a leftist however. After he read the March 1949 issue of Phyllis's newsletter, he drove to St. Louis to meet the "guy" who edited it.

After several months of a courtship that consisted of a once a week date (they were both very busy) and letters that were usually essays, sometimes in verse, they got married and lived happily ever after. Except that only fairy tales end at this point; life doesn't, Phyllis's biography doesn't, and certainly the Schlafly's marriage didn't. It was then that Phyllis began her "real career." Raising six children was, of course, not enough (although she puts it the other way around — "I just don't think that for most women a career success is enough"). She found taking care of babies fun, she says, but while she breast-fed the youngest, baked health-food bread a decade before it became popular, and taught them all to read, she was not "just a housewife."

"Just your average housewife," says Felsenthal, "does not run for Congress and testify before Senate committees and study nuclear strategy and write an eight-hundred page book on Henry Kissinger." By late 1971, Schlafly had fought on the conservative side of many issues; national defense, the encroachments of Big Brother, the danger of world communism, and the election of Barry Goldwater. But when the ERA began to alarm some of her conservative friends, she nearly had to be dragged away from her preoccupation with the arms race and Salt I. When Shirley Spellerberg asked her to debate a feminist on the ERA, Schlafly complained, "I don't even know what side I'm on." But after reading some background material on the subject, she was quite suddenly convinced that ERA was not the "something between in-

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nocuous and mildly helpful" piece of legislation that she had imagined.

She had two main objections. Section I of the Amendment is not worded in the same way as the 14th Amendment that extended rights to freed black slaves. Instead of promising *equal protection* under the law, the text of the ERA promises *"equality of rights* under the law." Former Senator Sam Ervin, who had similar reservations about the wording, said that the 14th Amendment does not require "identity of treatment. It permits a state to make distinctions between persons ... if the distinctions are based on some fair or reasonable classification and all persons embraced within the classification are treated alike." (The 14th Amendment language is used by the way, in several state ERAs, including that of Illinois, which Schlafly endorses.) Identity of treatment, Schlafly and other conservatives fear, could be used to force pregnant women into combat, could create a constitutional justification for abortion (since women would have an equal right, with men, *not* to be pregnant) and could, they think, leave millions of women and children destitute because husbands would no longer be forced to support them. Why this particular argument is invalid will be discussed later.

But it is Section II, which is rarely mentioned in most discussions of the ERA, that Schlafly considers most dangerous because it gives Congress the "power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article." These simple words, she warns, would give the federal government the power to completely rewrite state laws in the areas of marriage, divorce, child support, and adoption. And, Felsenthal states, "considering that Section II threatened to transfer some 70 percent of a state legislature's already rapidly dwindling power to the federal government, it was not hard to get a majority of state legislators to agree — especially when Schlafly presented specifics." (Again, Schlafly overlooks very important information to make her argument against Section II. Since 1865 when the 13th Amendment was ratified, it has been routine for most constitutional amendments — with a few exceptions in which it would have been unnecessary — to contain such an enabling clause, originally intended to allow Congress to make its legislative intent clear in the case of possibly adverse Supreme Court decisions. The Amendment would *invalidate* state laws that discriminated, and if a state continued to enforce such laws, the federal government could either enforce the Amendment through the courts, as a result of citizens initiating a complaint that their constitutional rights were impaired, or through Congress passing a general law along the lines of the Voting Rights Act, saying that states may not act in certain ways. It is hardly accurate to call either of these options "rewriting" state laws.)

So it was that the Amendment that had breezed through the U.S. Congress, the Amendment that twenty states had ratified within three months, and thirty within a year, was in a time of increasing freedom for American women, seemingly stopped cold by one woman, Phyllis Schlafly.

But if we have, however succinctly, answered the question of *how* Phyllis Schlafly stopped, or at least slowed down, the ERA, we have not fully answered the question of why she didn't fight instead to have its wording changed. Very early in this biography, we are made aware that the stereotyped image of the sexual bigot is not going to fit her. If Schlafly is, in some very important ways, a traditionalist, she certainly is not a person who believes women are inferior, or like children, to be seen and not heard. If anything, she believes women are superior to men, able (if not obliged) to rock the cradle, stir the soup, and design computer programs all at the same time. Why then, the most visible aspect of her stop-the-ERA campaign — her hatred, shared by her followers, of feminists and feminism?

Partly, the reason is in her absolute connection of "libbers" with the left, and thus with unilateral disarmament, with radical lesbianism, with pro-abortion forces, with socialism, or worse — communism. As Felsenthal says, "[c]ommon threads — religious, moral values, a conviction (to Phyllis utterly indisputable) that there *is* a right and a wrong, that everything is *not* relative — tie together, permeate, often stimulate, the positions she has taken in over three decades of political activism. They tie SALT to ERA to communism to abortion to the size of the defense budget." In effect, Schlafly, who is by her actions very liberated, has allowed other women to define what a feminist is and should be, and has been trapped by their definition into denying to herself the problems women face in this culture. As Thomas Szasz has said, "In the animal kingdom, the rule is, Eat or be eaten; in the human kingdom, define or be defined." Hundreds of thousands of would-be feminists have felt alienated by the "Feminism is lesbianism" elitism of some adherents of the movement because they themselves were heterosexual and/or housewives and thus, apparently, unliberated. What a powerful force Schlafly could have been if she had insisted that the word feminism be enlarged to include *all* the women who feel that no opportunity should be denied them because of their sex.

As it is, she has become one more in a line of very gifted women who, having made it, refuse to acknowledge the obstacles they were forced to climb over to get there. For even though she says now, in the heat of feminist-baiting, that she has never once been discriminated against, there *were* obstacles. To name just one instance, in 1952, when she ran against the Democratic Congressional incumbent, the media was unbearably condescending to her, calling her the "good-looking blonde candidate" and the "East Side's powder puff candidate." And of course the St. Louis papers assigned the women's editor to her campaign, while the male candidate was covered by the political editor.

In order to prove discrimination is a myth, Schlafly also claims that she was invited, in 1945, to attend Harvard Law School, five years before that institution changed its policy against admitting women. Felsenthal says that her research indicates it is probable that she was: her professors were so impressed with her brilliance that they were willing to make her the rare exception to the rule. But one very brilliant exception can hardly disprove discrimination.

This refusal to acknowledge barriers after they are surmounted is what Carol Heilburn, in *Reinventing Womanhood,* calls "that distressing attitude of achieving women: 'I made it, why can't you,' that failure to sympathize with the struggles of less vigorous female selves, that has always

COURTESY PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY

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marked successful women. They refuse to understand the tokenism that they represent, refuse to see that their single presence, far from proving that anyone can make it, determines, under the present system, that no one else will."

Historically, it is true, there have been many cases of a very brilliant and almost inhumanly determined woman becoming the first exception to a rule against woman's participation in some part of society heretofore an exclusive male club. And often these women are so engrossed with the struggle to succeed that they fail to acknowledge, then or later, that there are any barriers for women. Golda Meir, Helene Deutsch, one of the first women psychologists, and journalist Dorothy Thompson all come to mind as examples of women who refused to even see the barriers of convention, and who succeeded in spite of them. And all three later publicly stated that they felt no disadvantage from their sex.

But Schlafly goes a step further. She says she believes that there are no barriers to a woman's success, but demands protection for women because of their role as childbearers, and slavery for men as their supporters at home and defenders in times of war. She defends the existing structure of laws that limit women's working hours and give them special privileges that make them less desirable employees and hurt their chances of being hired. She demands laws that force a man to support his wife, regardless of circumstances, saying, "The law is beautiful. He is liable, she is not. Is that fair? Sure. That's the beautiful way men treat women in this country." (Again, Schlafly is wrong. Except in nine community property states, a wife can't even force her husband to *tell* her what he makes; it is nearly impossible for a woman to force her husband, even through the courts, to support her if he doesn't want to — unless she leaves him. Men do support their wives, but not because, as Schlafly implies, they are forced to do so by the law.)

It is not surprising, Felsenthal remarks, that most of Schlafly's support comes from "middle - aged, full - time homemakers with no job skills. ...Those women had gone into marriage when it was assumed that it was the wife's duty to bear and raise children and the husband's duty to provide the support. 'ERA does not even include a grandmother clause,' Schlafly [is] fond of saying." But even Phyllis would have to admit, though I can find no evidence that she has done so, that passage of the amendment would not *compel* husbands to stop supporting their wives.

It is certainly no credit to traditional family values to assume that those traditions must be enforced by law in order to work. As Gail Sheehy said in a recent *New York Times* article about Schlafly: "Not one notch can be loosened on the yoke binding men to take care of women, she is saying. And insofar as it is legally possible, men must be forbidden to fail. As her father did."

For Schlafly, who comes through in this book, states Spencie Love in her *Washington Post* review, as "sharp and unbending as steel" ("imagine Ayn Rand describing an ice pick"), has called the ERA the "men's liberation amendment," as in some ways it is and should be. But Schlafly has misplaced her sympathy for the women in this country, preferring them to be forced into dependency by legal protections. And in fact Schlafly's fear of special legislation and more government control to insure equality should the ERA pass, is badly matched with her love of protective legislation for the "weaker sex," legislation which really is a barrier to the ordinary woman, and even harder to change than modern society's attitudes toward woman's "proper role."

Victoria Varga is managing editor of *LR*.

The lessons of Vietnam

ROSS LEVATTER

Never Again: Learning from America's Foreign Policy Failures, *by Earl C. Ravenal. Temple University Press, 153 pp., $12.50 hard cover, $7.95 soft.*

WAS VIETNAM A MISTAKE? With that perfect perception that comes with hindsight, most Americans, including America's foreign policy bureaucracy, think so now. But Earl Ravenal says it wasn't a mistake.

Of course Ravenal doesn't mean by this that our new President's campaign rhetoric to the effect that Vietnam was a "noble and heroic" effort was in any way close to the mark in evaluating our efforts in that Asian civil war. Ravenal's is instead a deeper insight: To call an action a "mistake" means that if you're confronted with the same options and the same restrictions — the same benefits, risks, pay-offs, and constraints, *you'll do something else;* you won't, after all, make the same mistake twice. But the tragedy of Vietnam, Ravenal insists, and the danger of American foreign policy is that, faced with the same situation we *would* do the same thing: We would, symbolically, re-enter Vietnam.

Vietnam was not a mistake, it was a choice; it was a choice made consciously and with knowledge of the risks and the costs. The decision was made that it was worth it. To avoid another such war we must go beyond analyzing Vietnam and analyze the foundations of American foreign policy. We must pass over Vietnam the mistake and seek out Vietnam the choice.

Given such a goal, Earl Ravenal is certainly a man for the task. An Adjunct Professor at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, Ravenal has authored many books and articles on foreign policy questions, emphasizing the value of free trade and American non-intervention to the goals of a reasonably conceived peace and national security. He was the primary author of Libertarian Presidential candidate Ed Clark's White Paper on "Foreign and Military Policy."

There are many critiques of the Vietnam war, based on different assumptions, aimed at different goals, emphasizing different aspects, each unwilling to look past its own blind spots and appreciate certain advantages the other critiques offer. Ravenal goes beyond these and offers a critique of the critiques of Vietnam.

Ravenal distinguishes five different lessons that could be drawn from Vietnam, implying five different futures for American foreign policy.

The first four are most prevalent:

1. The instrumental (the establishment's response): We can do better, in various ways, 'next time.' We should prepare to do so; all we need is better tools — more effective weapons, more decisive tactics, bolder diplomacy.

2. The proportional (the liberal critique): Yes, we made mistakes, but they can be explained away as special cases. The fault was not American intervention, but our persistence in the face of disproportionate costs and our failure to recognize the unique liabilities of the situation. We should pursue selective intervention in the future and retain the flexibility to get out if it is not going well.

3. The consequential (the economic argument): What was wrong was the inefficiency, the distortion of priorities. We should conserve resources, redesign defense programs, transfer expenditures to domestic sectors.

4. The fundamental (the moral and institutional case): We can blame the 'crimes' of successive administrations and the inherent nature of the American system. Moral norms should constrain our conduct absolutely, regardless of considerations of national interest; but political, social, and economic institutions will have to change before we can expect a constructive foreign policy.

The fifth lesson is Ravenal's own:

5. The strategic (the ultimate strategic lessons): America must make a large-scale strategic adjustment, more complete than we have seen, more pervasive than is yet realized. We must adjust our entire foreign policy orientation to the evolving constraints of the international system and our own domestic system.

The "hawkish" mindset, well represented these days in establishment circles, has a vision of unquestioned American military superiority, allowing American forces to swoop down anywhere in the world and "set things right." It sees Vietnam through instrumentalist glasses, drawing the first possible lesson.

One typical reaction from its representatives is that Vietnam "proves" our military isn't powerful enough, that more must be spent on bombs and brigades, that our reserves must be strengthened, and perhaps a return to a peacetime

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draft is warranted. New monies must be spent on further research into stronger "defense" systems.

Another ever more worrisome lesson the "instrumentalists" are drawing is that in any future conflict, American response must be, to use Ravenal's summary, "sudden, central, ... and overwhelming." They realize that the gradual build-up approach used in Korea and Vietnam has built-in disadvantages: it gives the American citizenry time to react to higher taxes and dead bodies; it requires compromise with one's domestic opponents to get the required majority backing; it gives time for dissent to grow and requires a stifling of that dissent. The instrumentalists feel Vietnam discredited the doctrine of measured and progressive application of conventional force, and they turn instead to other, more "successful" models of action: the 1958 Taiwan Strait conflict and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, representing superpower confrontations resolved via nuclear threats; 1958's Lebanon landing and 1965's Dominican Republic occupation, representing sudden overwhelming mobile interventions that completely smothered the small power situations that were developing. These then represent instrumentalist models for future interventions.

This is the group whose lesson on Vietnam can be summed up: If only we'd — dropped more bombs, deeper North, earlier — mined Haiphong Harbor in 1965 — initiated a strong, sustained attack in the North — sent them back to the stone age. This group is well represented among American foreign policy academics and practitioners; in a recent survey of over 2,000 of them, in response to the statement: "If foreign interventions are undertaken, the necessary force should be applied in a short period of time rather than through a policy of graduated escalation," 78 percent agreed and 49 percent "strongly agreed." Needless to add, this group is especially well represented in the Reagan administration, a fact we should view with some alarm.

Ravenal sees the "proportionalists" as enamored by intervention in the abstract; they seek to devise a critique that will nowhere renounce intervention in general, but only "bad" intervention, usually after the fact, since they themselves were initially among the staunchest defenders of the Vietnam war. As Ravenal evaluates the proportionalist lesson:

> Their problem arises from the fact that many of these critics originally supported the American stand in Southeast Asia on strategic or ideological grounds; ... They defected largely because they believed that the costs and the destruction had become disproportionate to the strategic results and to the value of the American interests in the situation. The proportional critique offered a logical — and respectable — way to climb down from previous support for the Vietnam War while reaffirming the feasibility of future interventions and the necessity and morality of limited war in general. (Of course, this intellectual stance also enabled the critics to climb back up, into office, and to execute "effective" foreign policies again. There is more than a tinge of careerism in the proportionalist position.)

Apart from the hypocrisy of this lesson, Ravenal points to a number of strategic flaws. First, the question of whether or not to intervene is always raised after the fact. Given that many proportionalist critics themselves thought Vietnam worth the intervention initially, what makes them think they'll be better able to differentiate in advance the "good" interventions from the "bad" ones of the future? Thus, in practice, the proportionalist doctrine would more often tell us when to pull out than whether or not to get involved in the first place.

One reason the proportionalist doctrine is difficult to apply is that certain important conditions in each intervention — for example, the opposition's desire to fight on — are uncertain and beyond our control; therefore costs of the venture which depend on such issues may only afterwards seem too high. The Soviet move into Afghanistan is an example, as were our initial moves into Vietnam. In both cases the costs were much higher than initially anticipated.

Ravenal might also have noted that costs are subjective, in the sense that the costs of any action depend on what "hangs" on it, and what "hangs" on it varies with different conceptions of the *purpose* of our foreign policy. The Shah of Iran's overthrow in January of 1979 was, for example, not costly for our government's attempts to protect U.S. soil and American lives at home; it *was* costly for its attempts to maintain the ability to project force abroad through proxy forces in the Persian Gulf. So whether or not the Shah's exile is viewed as costly depends on the purpose of our foreign policy.

Indeed, the subjectivity and uncertainty of costs will al-

The danger of American foreign policy is that, confronted again with the problem of Vietnam, we would make all the same mistakes.

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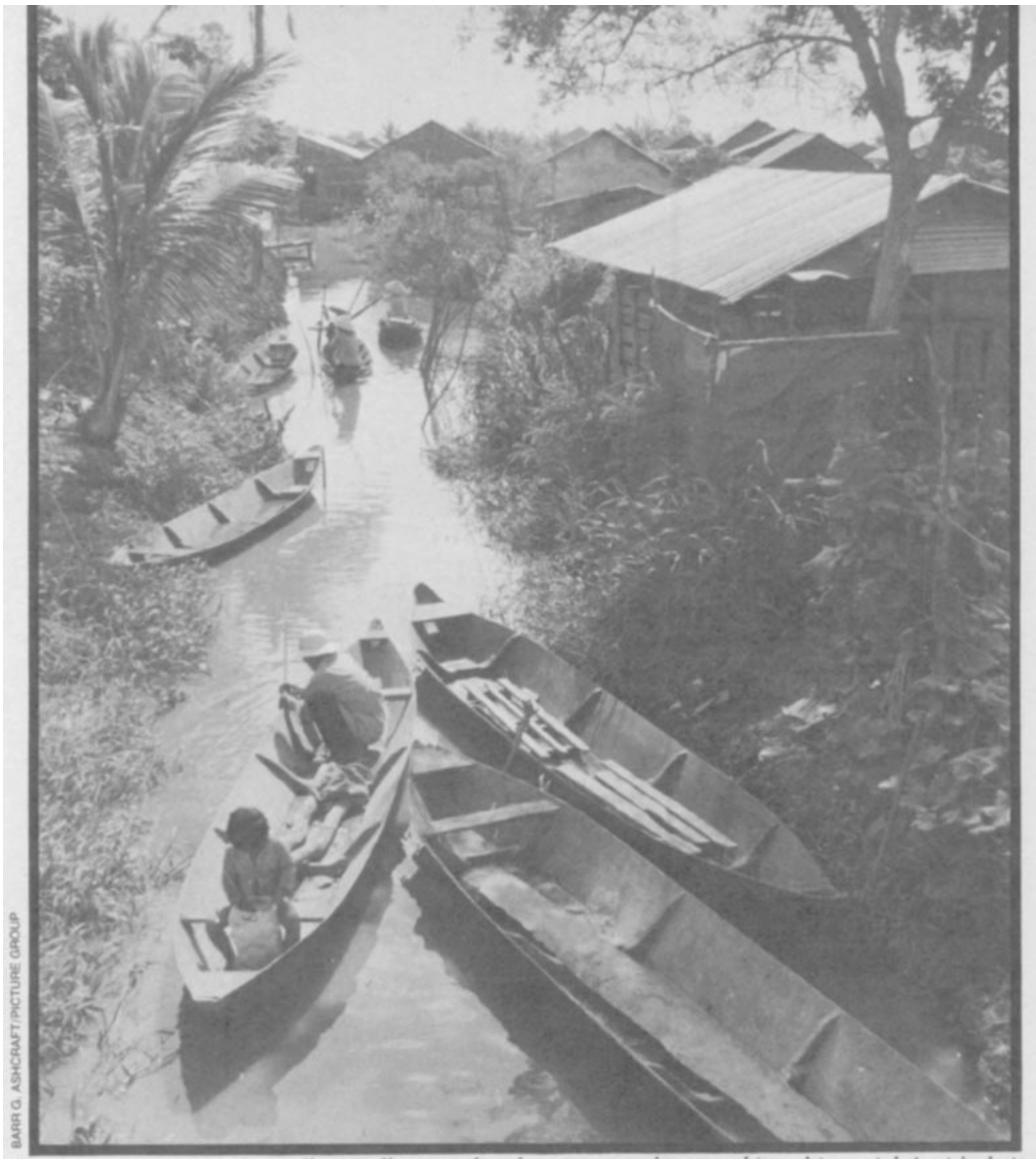

In how many countries will we "allow our hawks to swoop down and 'set things right' with their bombs and brigades"?

ways allow our adversaries to control us, if we follow the proportionalist view. They know that if they just keep fighting long enough, the costs will eventually escalate to the point where the American public, perhaps even those in charge, perceive them as too high. The proportionalists, with their defense of intervention "when necessary and as long as feasible" almost guarantee the worst outcome. As Ravenal sums up, "The lesson is not how to extricate—with honor or otherwise—but how not to intervene in the first place."

The "consequentialist" (economic) and the "fundamentalist" (moral) analyses are treated more kindly by Ravenal. Both have some valuable insights, but each is at least partically deficient. The consequentialists observe the disastrous effects military intervention and a bloated defense budget have on the American economy, especially, as Seymour Melman argues in his books *Pentagon Capitalism* and *The Permanent War Economy,* on the capital structure, which affects future productivity. So far, so good. The consequentialists go on to argue, however, that the "lesson of Vietnam" is that the quality of life in America would improve if we decreased the military budget and spent money instead on domestic programs. To reach this conclusion they develop economic models based on historical relations between such aggregates as "defense," "private consumption," "private investment," and "government domestic spending."

Ravenal points out that, since this position is based on economic considerations rather than morality, it does not oppose strategic doctrines, such as the Nixon doctrine, which advocate "cheap" intervention. Covert interventions, manipulations of proxies abroad, and economic pressure through the IMF and other U.S. government-controlled lending institutions might all be acceptable if not overly costly in a narrow budgetary sense. Yet all such maneuvers could embroil America in serious overseas combat.

Moreover, since *every* defense cut, seemingly, could be used instead on some domestic program, it is inconsistent for the consequentialists to be satisfied with anything less than completely eliminating the defense budget. The consequentialist criteria do not distinguish among defense programs actually geared toward real defense and defense proposals geared toward intervention abroad; both types of programs show up under the defense budget and both deflect monies that *could* be used in domestic programs. So the consequentialist model yields no standard by which to determine *what* to cut.

The fundamentalist critics, who base their lesson on moral considerations, speak out vehemently against American military excursions abroad; composed in large part (though not entirely) of Marxist oriented historians and economists (Ravenal mentions Gabriel Kolko, Paul Sweezy, David Horowitz, Richard Barnet, and William Appleman Williams, among others), they argue that American intervention abroad follows not from any realistic or objective national security needs but from the expansionistic demands of the capitalist economy.

For socialist thinkers to denounce American imperialism is mildly ironic, since from Marx himself through Fabian defenses of British imperialism and into recent times, socialists have long defended imperialism. But it would be unfair to label these thinkers doctrinaire, and they are obviously sincere. Libertarians such as Murray Rothbard, Leonard Liggio, Walter Grinder, and John Hagel III have all pointed out that, while failing to distinguish between *laissez-faire* and today's variant of state capitalism, the above critics are correct: today's system and the people who control it have a strong tendency to push us into military adventures abroad, both in an effort to socialize the costs of doing business overseas and in an effort to expand domestic markets for a few State-favored businesses. (In this way, interestingly, Marxist claims that capitalism is necessarily expansionistic are self-fulfilling prophecies, for if businessmen studying economics read Marx, *and then gain control over the government,* that is exactly what they'll have the State do.)

Can the fundamentalist lesson itself be enough? No, it too faces problems. At least some of its proponents require a complete social revolution before any basic foreign policy changes can be instituted, which, given the kind of social revolution they call for, makes their position an exercise in futility. Moreover, some fundamentalists argue against even defensive military uses, such as repelling invasions from our shores. Third, some fundamentalists argue not so much against intervention as against

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"bad" intervention, urging instead that American force be used around the world to help "the right side."

But the basic issue, the one Ravenal stresses, is that moral proscriptions are not by themselves enough to make a foreign policy. And not simply because war is often sold to the victims as a "moral crusade." Even granting that a moral foreign policy is strictly one of defense, what follows? Should we build the M-X? Should we sign SALT II? Should we boycott wheat sales to Russia until they pull out of Afghanistan? Should we increase the reserves? None of these questions involve sending troops abroad, and people arguing on both sides claim to be "strictly for defense." A fundamentalist who is nothing more would find himself in a dilemma, or at least a state of ignorance. The problem is easily put, borrowing some terms from Robert Nozick: fundamentalist prohibitions can be side-constraints, but not goals. The moral lessons to be learned from Vietnam, important as they are, are insufficient to construct a strategic vision of legitimate military use for the future. As Ravenal puts it:

> ... the issue becomes: How — in what kind of international system — can a nation afford the moral position of the fundamentalists? And how — under what set of presumptions — can a nation consistently carry out a noninterventionist policy?
>
> When the moral and institutional critique of the fundamentalists is seen in this way, it leads to a strategic critique, and it invites us to draw strategic lessons from the situation of the United States in the world after its emergence from the shadow of Vietnam.

This leads us, after reflecting on the flaws of the other lessons of Vietnam, to what Ravenal considers the correct lesson: the strategic lesson. Look at some facts and see what lesson comes to mind; America spent almost $136 billion, killed 2.7 million Indochinese, lost 57 thousand American men in the process (ignoring the hundreds of thousands physically and mentally scarred) created 12 million Indochinese refugees, and still lost. Isn't the obvious lesson that, powerful as they are, superpowers can't control the world anymore? That lesson is reinforced by seeing the Soviets still bogged down in Afghanistan. What would you think if you saw the United States embassy taken over in Iran, and the Soviets kicked out of Somalia and Ethiopia and Egypt? You'd think that the forces of nationalism, and religion, and self-determination were asserting themselves and couldn't be stopped. And you'd be right.

> The balance of power and the alternatives of global management and revived bipolar competition might be bracketed as mechanisms and schemes to perpetuate our international control. Opposed to all of these variants of managed worlds and strategies for American control would be a more loosely structured and less institutionalized world and a corresponding American policy of substantial political-military disengagement.
>
> This alternative policy of disengagement is based on a certain set of expectations of the international system.
>
> 1. The ability of any single nation, or combination of nations, to control the international system is decreasing. This phenomenon can be termed a *diffusion of power*. ...
>
> 2. The international system will probably continue to degenerate into a disorder more severe than we have known... By all measures of power... there may be fifteen or twenty salient states ... potent to the point of enjoying the possibility of independent action.
>
> 3. Few if any governing groups will have enough legitimacy to induce their nations to support actions for the sake of international order that are not in the obvious and immediate interest of the nation itself....
>
> 4. Thus, the United States and other analogously situated nations will probably look increasingly to their own security and welfare, counting on their own resources, and, where these fail, relying on their own initiatives in strategic and economic diplomacy....
>
> This is a kind of international system, very different from the one we have become accustomed to since 1945. We have to get used to a world that cannot be controlled by us, a world where we don't have the ability, let alone the right, to act out our needs for national self-esteem....

That's the strategic lesson: the world is rapidly becoming a place no one power, no matter how strong, could control if it wanted, so a foreign policy based on the illusion of control and stability is both costly and futile. Rather than attempting control — which is impossible, expensive, and often immoral — it is better to try adjustment — to make your plans tentative, not to count on promises, not to make any you can't keep, to shrink your notion of strategic necessity and strengthen it by bringing it closer to home, and instead of using power to do good, to restrain power from doing harm. But let Ravenal speak for himself:

> In the world economy, we should preserve autonomy of national decision making and achieve relative freedom from vulnerabilities. ... We should place greater weight on developing specific hedges against the pressures and deprivations that may be occasioned by the hostility or opportunism or simple incompetence of other nations. (In other words, we might protect our security far better by eliminating vulnerabilities than by creating interdependencies.)...

Ravenal is here arguing, to choose a specific example, that decontrolling domestic oil and thereby increasing domestic supply is preferable to attempting through military means to "insure stability" in the Persian Gulf. We might add to this policy recommendation that removing all controls from the economy — both subsidies and regulations — coupled with a foreign policy of investment abroad at your own risk — that is, free trade and non-intervention — will allow profit-seeking entrepreneurs to best approximate just what the economically most efficient ratio between domestic production and foreign trade is, under any given set of circumstances. Further, he states,

> In international politics, we should achieve the flexibility to avoid conflict by divesting rather than acquiring commitments in situations we cannot control, and by providing insulation from the outcomes of situations we cannot afford to control....
>
> This is not tantamount to leaving the United States defenseless... [n] or is this a matter of waffling on the [Soviet] 'threat.' ...
>
> Rather, a policy of disengagement would accept a divisible peace, some reverses to our positions, and a loss of our special control over the course of the entire system ... [W]e may realize that, whether we intervene or disengage, oppose or acquiesce, we can live with or cope with a wide range of plausible outcomes. Conversely ... the difference between the best and the worst of the plausible outcomes may seem less than the cost of causing the best to happen — even the cost of successful deterrence.

Disengagement and non-intervention are not solutions that most Americans prefer, at least initially — as in their first vision of a totally free marketplace, completely open to untrammeled competition, they fear they'll be unable to cope with what portends to be rapid and unpredictable change — but they *are* solutions we can live with. More important, it is becoming more and more probable that they are the *only* solutions that we, and the rest of the world, can live with.

This is an important book, especially for libertarians. During the recent Presidential campaign, Ed Clark intelligently and forcefully put forth the libertarian case for non-intervention, thereby significantly distinguishing his position from that of all other major candidates, especially Ronald Reagan. But unfortunately Clark's ability to intelligently articulate libertarian positions on foreign and military policy places him with the minority of libertarian spokespeople. Too many libertarians have yet to grasp the underlying unity of free market radicalism and military non-intervention, both of which demand an understanding of the benefits indirectly achieved via invisible-hand mechanisms.

But before we can present non-intervention intelligently, we must understand it ourselves; we must understand, for example, that we do not choose non-intervention in the hopes that the Soviets will follow suit rather than take advantage of our resulting weakness. Instead, we choose non-intervention because it will make us more secure no matter what the Soviets do. We must understand that today's high costs of intervention, in dollars as well as in dissent, are not the result of Soviet action, and that if the Soviets choose to persist in intervening after we desist, the costs of their actions will fall on them, not us. Earl Ravenal states his case for non-intervention with scholarly eloquence and a quiet passion borne of conviction; it is a conviction libertarians must share, as we face four years of Ronald Reagan presiding over an increasingly unstable ship of State.

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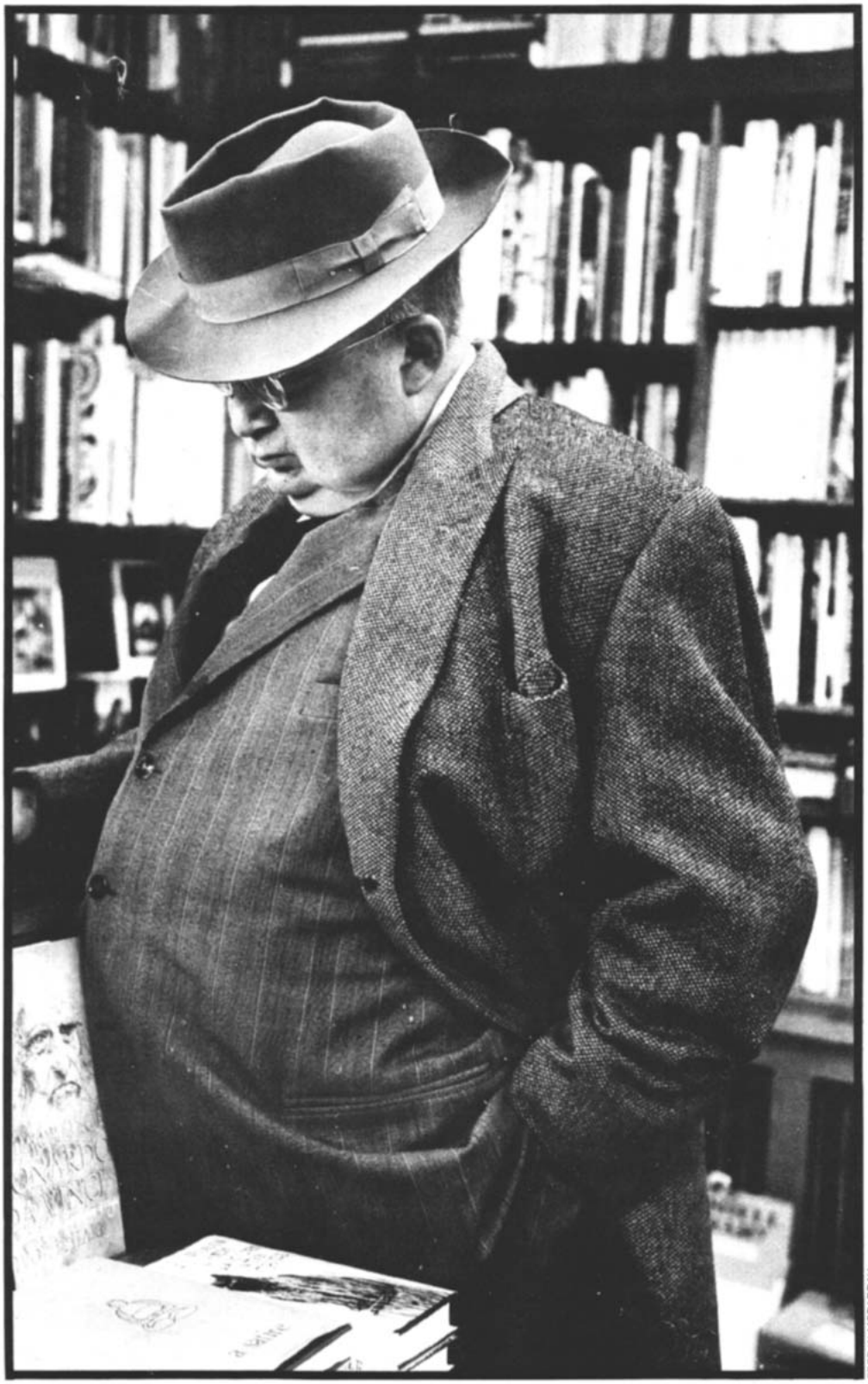

FRED W. MCDARRAH

A.J. Leibling in 1962. He was the "best reporter of his generation" and a journalistic artist.

Seceder from the pack

JACK SHAFER

Wayward Reporter: The Life of A.J. Liebling, *by Raymond Sokolow. Harper & Row, 354 pp., $16.95.*

PACK JOURNALISM OCcurs when the hounds of the news media converge on the fox we call news — be it the news of a political campaign, a war, the police beat, city hall, or changing fashion. News hounds generally chow down on identical news releases, speeches, and other handouts, and even crib the notes of their fellow hounds. The hounds usually attempt to get chummy with the fox (the candidate, general, desk sergeant, press officer, or personality) so they can get the so-called "insider stuff" before they are sprung from the kennel to bay their identical tunes.

Even such a journalistic saint as H.L. Mencken confessed to running with the pack on occasion. In Mencken's early newspaper days, for example, he and another police beat reporter from a competing daily once approached the police reporter from Baltimore's third daily with the idea of splitting the city into three zones, each reporter covering a zone and then contributing to a common pool from which all could write stories. But the third reporter's journalistic ethics would not allow such a transgression, so Mencken and his pal retaliated by concocting crime stories out of whole cloth and filing them. The third reporter caught such holy hell from his editor for consistently missing these fictitious stories that he soon surrendered his ethics and joined the pool.

Journalists ride in packs because it's the safe way out, because they're lazy and fear for their jobs. As veteran reporter Karl Fleming puts it in Timothy Crouse's study of pack journalism, *The Boys On the Bus* (Ballantine; 1974),

> The editors don't want scoops. Their abiding interest is making sure that nobody else has got anything that they don't have, not getting something that nobody else has.
>
> So eventually a very subtle kind of thing takes over and the reporter says to himself, "All I gotta do to satisfy my editor and publisher is just get what the other guys are getting, so why should I bust my ass?" And over a period of a few years he joins the club...
>
> ... any troublemaking reporter who walks into a press conference and asks a really mean snotty question which is going to make the candidate and his people really angry is going to be treated like a goddamn pariah. 'Cause these guys in this club, they don't want any troublemakers stirring up the waters, which means they might have to dig for something that's not coming down out of the daily handout, or coming in from the daily pool report about what went on. They'd rather sit around the pressroom at the hotel every night, drinking booze and playing poker.

A pack that can't be reformed or broken up can only be reported on and critiqued — which is why, in 1972, when the now-defunct journalism

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review, [*More*], staged a counter-convention to the publishing giants' annual New York confab, and was casting about for a title that would epitomize the sass, irreverence, and style the magazine was trying to put into media criticism, the title the convention organizers chose was the Liebling Convention. "What is a Liebling?" asked one letter to [*More*]. Raymond Sokolov's biography, *Wayward Reporter: The Life of A.J. Liebling,* answers thusly: Liebling was the best reporter of his generation, the inventor of modern media criticism in his Wayward Press series in *The New Yorker,* a writer who elevated journalism to art, the progenitor of the New Journalism of Tom Wolfe, and a career journalist who published a couple of million words and more than a dozen books, before he was slain by his own gluttony at the age of 59 in 1963.

Though schooled in journalism at Columbia, a place he later described as having "all the intellectual status of a training school for future employees of the A & P," Liebling's real education came from the police beat and feature news stories he wrote for the New York dailies. Early on he rebelled against both the arbitrary formalisms of daily newspapering and the autocratic editors and publishers who bred pack journalism. He turned the already time-worn conventions of reporting inside out, inserted himself into his stories as straight man, prop, or foil, and somehow got it past his editors. For Liebling, reporters were not cameras, but participants in events and authors of essentially fictional accounts called "news stories."

Thus when the New York *World-Telegram* assigned the young Liebling to the Groundhog Day beat he reported the strike of the Amalgamated Union of Saps — those who have had to read and write reports of Boy Scouts chivvying groundhogs out of snow drifts to divine how much longer winter would last. Like most journalists, Liebling was not above inventing quotes to get his point across, but instead of attributing them to anonymous sources as most would, he summoned one Secaucus Jack Dudelsackpfeiffer from his imagination to say, "Two courses of action are open to us. To exterminate the groundhogs or to exterminate the Boy Scouts. Both are protected by law. Let us, therefore, exterminate the story."

While at the *World-Telegram* he also shaped his famous profiles of pugilists, lowlifes, con-men, theatrical mountebanks, and speed-talking athletes into a sort of personal trademark. Liebling could cover a serious story in the classic, "value-free," pack style, as he did in the Lindbergh kidnapping case, but he preferred to escape the pack sensibility by choosing subjects the pack wasn't interested in— the inventor of the "two-piece four-piece suit," the man who claimed to have cornered the market in cockroaches, or a review of the fish at the Aquarium written as if they were a show-biz novelty act. Inevitably, Liebling had too much literary muscle to flex in the confines of a daily newspaper. So in 1935, at the age of 30, he moved on to *The New Yorker.*

From the start, the models for Liebling's literary adventure had been his heroes Defoe, Hazlitt, and Egan, prolific British journalist-pamphleteer-essayists who wrote about society's outcasts and underdogs. Over drinks with friends he voiced his ambition to extend the tradition of these British writers, and also the very different tradition of the French members of his curious pantheon, Villon, Rabelais, and Stendhal. He boasted that he could "write better than anyone who could write faster, and faster than anyone who could write better." In addition to physically slumming on the mean streets and dogfaced frontlines of life, Sokolov has it that Liebling also slummed in the supposedly low art of journalism so that "he could commit art on the q.t., sneak up on the reader, who only expected truth, but suddenly found he was getting beauty into the bargain."

Sent to France by *The New Yorker* in October, 1939 to cover the war in Europe, Liebling began filing a new sort of foreign dispatch, what Sokolov aptly calls a lower-key, more sociological reportage that the foreign bureaus of papers like *The New York Times* have since made the new orthodoxy. Chased out of France by the Germans, Liebling moved to North Africa and continued to write his side of the story — the side the pack and the wire services didn't cover, an idiosyncratic and unheroic view of war peopled with swindling Arabs, amiable American thugs, and poker-playing correspondents. Liebling's D-Day dispatch prefigures the anti-grandiose Vietnam journalism of Michael Herr's *Dispatches.* Combat time becomes flexible: a four minute amphibious landing as described by Liebling includes digressions on the origin of the anchor winch, a freeze frame of an American flag, a quick look at an unmanned machine gun, a comparison of unloading infantry to a Coney Island excursion, and a ship's deck awash with blood and condensed milk.

When Liebling returned to the States he revived the "Wayward Press" column at *The New Yorker* and began his career as media critic. "There are three kinds of writers of news in our generation," Liebling wrote:

> In inverse order of wordly consideration, they are:
>
> 1. The reporter, who writes what he sees.
> 2. The interpretive reporter, who writes what he sees and what he construes to be its meaning.
> 3. The expert, who writes what he construes to be the meaning of what he hasn't seen.

Himself an interpretive reporter, Liebling spent the better part of the next two decades writing what he construed to be the meaning behind the American press he studied, loved, and knew so intimately. Liebling was an emotional leftist, if not an ideological one, and a charter member of the Newspaper Guild. His emblematic slogan, "The freedom of the press belongs to those who own one," can be read as a paean to libertarianism, but for Liebling it was a venomous assault on the publishers who carved up one-newspaper-town empires, starved reporters, and twisted news and editorials to serve themselves. He openly identified himself with liberals, labor, and, predictably enough, the underdogs. When editors played up the 1948 HUAC sessions with star repentant communists Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers, Liebling lobbed this grenade in his Wayward Press column:

> If it should be argued that newspapers don't aim mudballs in their news columns — that they simply report upon the mudballs other people throw — it should be tempted to reply that this defense is a triple-distilled extract of Bulgarian fusel oil, turpentine, molasses, potato skins and grain hulls. The importance that a newspaper attributes to a story depends on the editor's judgment. An editor who couldn't smell an odor of burning synthetic rubber about Miss Bentley's inside-policy data has an extremely insensitive nose for news.

Liebling was blowing the whistle here on the whole journalistic pack, the publishers, editors, and reporters in pursuit of Bentley and Chambers. The reader was being hustled, thought Liebling, and he deserved to be informed of it. If newspapers were by nature the fictions and frauds that he had decided they were earlier in his career, then clearly a consumer-protective critic was needed to comment on the technique, style, and content of the press. The resulting columns, later collected as *The Press,* stand as a model of learned media skepticism. Liebling knew the moves of Broadway's con-artists too well to be taken in by the stacked deck dealt by the kings of the fourth estate.

Sokolov has a nice touch when it comes to biography; he chronicles in just enough detail Liebling's life as a cultural Irishman in love with food and drink and in lust with fallen Irishwomen. First biographies often tend to be fawning public eulogies, but Sokolov rises above this trap — except perhaps at book's end when he laments in a maudlin closing note that had Liebling only lived another decade he could have covered the Indochina War, the Six Day War, Watergate, and the transformation of Clay into Ali. Liebling wrote with wit and verve about war, boxing, food, the press, and politics for more than 35 years. He lived a complete, though short life. Every man leaves life with some work undone; few important figures have their cultural places filled immediately. A. J. Liebling was no exception.

Jack Shafer is a contributing editor of *LR*.

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La Cage Aux Folles II, *starring Michel Serrault and Ugo Tognazzi, is "like a copy of the Mona Lisa. It magnifies the weaknesses of the original without adding anything interesting."*

On View

Not so gay

DAVID BRUDNOY

WHEN LAST WE spent time with Renato and Albin (Zaza) at *La Cage Aux Folles* (*LR*, October 1979), they had hilariously triumphed over the self-righteous head of the Union for Moral Order, a Gallic version of something that Jerry Falwell might find familiar, and they had married off Renato's son to the bigot's daughter, leaving everybody who saw the movie in stitches. Though, as I wrote at the time, *La Cage* managed simultaneously to enshrine several of the most annoying stereotypes of gay life and to play off them, to leapfrog away from them, the movie, even while confirming some of the worst suspicions of the homophobes — among them, that homosexuals actually seem to enjoy life without an excess of guilt — nonetheless served indisputably as an affirmation of human decency. I found, as did millions of others, that *La Cage* caused viewers to enter squirming with embarrassment only to leave the theater doubling up in happy laughter and feeling a hell of a lot better about the human race.

Now and again we hear rumors of an English language version of *La Cage* in the planning stages, Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis, who worked in drag in *Some Like It Hot*, mentioned as the likeliest stars. But as yet nothing has come of this loopy notion. Instead, or possibly in addition to an Americanization of *La Cage*, we have been handed a sequel. Alas, you can't go home again, in drag or out.

La Cage Aux Folles II

Everything is perfectly familiar about the sequel by Edouard Molinaro to his 1979 blockbuster, but it is rather like a splendid copy of the Mona Lisa: it's the same but it's off. Or, since the second outing is not a copy but an extension, it is like a good fake in the style of some great master. All the comforting elements are abundantly in evidence but somehow they don't add up to a masterpiece. *La Cage Aux Folles II* magnifies the weaknesses of the original while never managing to achieve anything distinctively new or even interestingly different. Arguably the funniest film, foreign or domestic, of the late 1970s, Molinaro's exploration of once forbidden territory — homosexuals are acceptable as tragic or as grotesque figures but not, until the first *La Cage*, as funny and wonderful figures on screen — now seems (and this is amazing in that nothing has come along to build further public acceptance of the understanding sensibility the first film gave life to) old-hat. Perhaps because virtually every serious filmgoer in America and Europe has seen and loved *La Cage Aux Folles*, Albin's delicious fruitiness and Renato's stolid affection and just barely restrained affectations come off in the sequel as tiresome.

There is of course a plot, of sorts, in fact a stupid and utterly implausible plot, not a comedy of confused identity but something demonstrating a confused notion of what the comedy of spy spoofery is all about. When Albin (Michel Serrault) feels that Renato (Ugo Tognazzi) no longer considers him sufficiently alluring in his drag roles at their nightclub, he sets out in broad daylight to prove that he is still a charmer. A young man on the run scoops Albin into his arms and races with the dear old thing to a hotel. Albin is thrilled; Renato, who is hiding behind bushes to see how agonizing his lover's excursion will be, comes dashing to the hotel just in time to find that Albin's new swain has been murdered. The murderer is murdered, too, and from then on our two heroes are on the lam, "protected" by *good* secret agents from the predations of the bad guys. The latter, you see, believe that the murdered young man has passed an important microfilm into Albin's hands, and at all costs they must retrieve it.

Just before Albin and Renato realize that the young men is dead — he has apparently swooned when told by Renato that Albin is a man, not a woman — Albin tosses off one of those priceless lines that almost rescue the sequel from its general inferiority: "Thanks for being so understanding, you young hunk." The young hunk understands nothing; he has been felled by a poisoned dart. The rest of the movie is poisoned by the dart of aggravated cutesiness and by an occasional burst of wholly gratuitous mean-spiritedness; at one point, Albin, quite distrait, shouts to Jacob (Benny Luke), their negro maid who feather-dusts and otherwise functions in a succession of bras and panties: "Go back up your coconut tree, you idiot!" It is the despised calling the despised despicable, and it smarts.

La Cage... II lacks any confrontation as fabulously comic

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as that in the original between our lovers and the atrocious Union for Moral Order maniac, the dinner table scene that ranks with the culinary orgy of *Tom Jones* among the most brilliantly conceived scenes of its type, ever. We spend some time with Renato's peasant kin in Italy, during which Albin must masquerade as a man — not become a man again, but pretend to be a woman pretending to be a man — and we are also given a fiendishly apt scene with our friends' bodyguards dressed up as swishes learning how to sashay from the master, Albin. Here and there the bits score a bull's-eye. And as in the original, which put the onus of responsibility for warped societal values not on the outcasts but on the insiders, there are moments when the darts hit their target perfectly. When, for example, Albin, terrified to appear in drag, comes out of a store dressed in workman's clothes, and is treated rudely by a driver, he shouts "Faggot!" at the offender. It has momentary bite and offers us a fleeting opportunity to learn something significant about our habits; it is not very different from the experience of seeing a determinedly middle-class black sneer at a black street punk, "Nigger!"

But as Samuel Goldwyn said, if you want a message, call Western Union. Especially is this so in comedy, which is rarely superlative when it is didactic. *La Cage Aux Folles II* is not anything so crude as a moral preachment, but it is confused, and confusing. It is an awkward blend of four ingredients: a spy spoof; a nostalgia piece aimed, quite precisely but not well, at the fans of the first *La Cage;* a series of barbs directed at homophobia; and a rather stupid, partially offensive excursion into slumming, here into the world of the effeminate among the homosexual population. It is too much of a trifle to be worthy of Gay Lib frothings, though frothing comes naturally to self-righteous and aggrieved minority groups, so there will be some, probably only a few, protests. But whereas *La Cage Aux Folles* functioned to enlighten, *La Cage Aux Folles II* serves more to solidify stereotypes. It is funny but not very funny, and coming after its precursor, it is especially remiss in offering not so much as one hint of a fully rounded human being who happens to be gay.

The Last Metro

François Truffaut's triumphant new film, which by the time you read this will probably have won the best foreign film Oscar, bears an odd title — it refers to the last subway of the evening, which anybody out on the town in occupied Paris felt more than a little urgency to catch — and a noble theme floating around a comedy of manners. Marion Steiner (Catherine Deneuve), an actress and loving wife, is trying both to hold her husband's theater together and to hide him from the Nazis and the bigotries of Daxiat (Jean-Louis Richard), a resolutely anti-semitic drama critic and collaborator. Lucas Steiner (Heinz Bennent, father of the young boy who starred in *The Tin Drum*) keeps himself from going bonkers by secretly directing the theater's current production. Meanwhile, a handsome young actor (Gérard Depardieu) falls, absent-mindedly, in love with Marion; and the assistant director, Jean-Loup Cottins (Jean Poiret), attempts to balance the theater's legitimate business with his perceived obligation to flatter the repulsive Daxiat and his personal desire to make everyone as happy as possible.

The Last Metro is obviously a civilized anti-war movie, a not-so-gentle jab at those Frenchmen who speedily entered into conspiracy with their Nazi conquerors, and a first-rate exercise by the almost invariably excellent Truffaut in the never-flagging genre of discreet and not-so-discreet love.

It is also, and this in so seemingly effortless a manner that it may be missed by inattentive moviegoers, a no-nonsense affirmation of the humanity of people who are homosexual. There are two homosexual characters who matter in the movie, and a third, a young actress of indefatigable opportunistic gutsiness, who may or may not be homosexual but who at least functions that way now and again. The theater's costume and set designer, one Arlette (Andrea Ferreol), is seen at the beginning of the film turning the young actor into mush. Or so it seems. He has, perhaps, merely been trying out a role, by attempting a seduction of the pleasant but hardly voluptuous lady walking down the street. Only much later do we, and Marion Steiner, discover her in a fevered embrace with the female ingénue. Marion asks her to lock the door, or better, to keep that sort of thing out of the theater. After which, nothing more is made of the matter, and Arlette becomes, as before, a cherished part of the little theater family.

Jean-Loup, however, is more central to the matter at hand. Daxiat, who is a walking catalogue of hostilities, dislikes not only Jews and plays that don't match his conventional tastes, but also homosexuals. He savages the play in his review by referring to Jean-Loup's "effeminate" direction, but there is no mistaking his meaning, nor, as the movie progresses, is there any mistaking Jean-Loup's tastes. Yet Truffaut never permits Jean-Loup so much as the slightest exaggerated gesture, or unseemly glance, or untoward activity. The director of the movie has taken the director of the play within the movie entirely as a man who is, among his other attributes, a homosexual — a character to be admired, but not adulated, or employed as a propaganda tool for tolerance.

The Last Metro has so very much to offer, so little of it concerning this subject, that it has, understandably, not been reviewed at this particular level. The anti-semitism, not the homophobia, is central to the plot, but the latter reminds us that the mentality of tyrants is at once narrow and broadly encompassing. The Nazis, the French collaborators with the

UNITED ARTISTS

Truffaut's new film, The Last Metro, *starring Catherine Deneuve and Gerard Depardieu, is a "stinging indictment of bigotry, not in the least burdensome in presenting its message."*

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Nazis, the Communist regimes of today, Khomeini's followers in Iran, the fascistic New Right haters in our own country right now, all manage without a moment's hesitation to include homosexuals among their bugaboos and their intended (and in the case of the Nazis and the Khomeini regime, to name only two examples, their actual) victims. Truffaut had no *need* of a minor subtext concerning gay people; the Jew-baiting and the Nazi occupation context are quite enough. He added the homosexual angle, I think, not for exploitation or some other unworthy reason, but rather to broaden the field he has prepared as a bed for his general theme. *La Cage Aux Folles II* is a well-meaning but failed travesty; *The Last Metro* is a stinging indictment of bigotry, not in the least burdensome in presenting its message — no Western Union, here — in an urbane, gentle comedy *cum* history lesson.

Spetters

Paul Verhoeven, who directed the worthy *Soldier of Orange* last year, a movie that dealt with the Dutch Resistance intelligently and coldly and, for some reason that I can't fathom, died almost immediately after leaving New York, returns with an abysmal, near-exploitation flick that has evidently bamboozled some of the more impressionable critics and is now venturing into the provinces to see what the locals will think of it. "Spetters" means "hotshots," and the trio of hot-pants lads on whom *Spetters* dwells are the sort you see lounging in the Dam Square in Amsterdam, sullen, beautiful, spoiled, indulged and indulgent, and experienced in drugs and sex and violence before their time. They and their prime lust object, a busy little entrepreneur who sells french fries and croquettes (made partly from dog food) and has her eager little mind firmly trained to find the main chance, come together because the boys ride motorbikes and the girl sells fries where the boys are.

Spetters is repulsive on every level except the purely carnal. If you enjoy seeing an "art" movie—an art movie is a small European film that nobody will give any Oscars to, and that will show not in the XXX-rated houses but instead in the college areas of town—in order to justify seeing very attractive nude young ladies and slightly less attractive but lithe nude young men, then *Spetters* is for you. It has a dozen scenes featuring genitals, about a zillion scenes featuring motorbikes zooming over garbage pits, and it attempts to tell a story.

Herewith, the story: Reen (Hans van Tongeren) hovers just at the brink of emerging into bikey stardom; his friend Hans (Maarten Spanjer) fails repeatedly with the girls but keeps plugging to keep up with Reen in the motorbike circuit; and their pal, Eve (Toon Agterberg), fixes cars, helps his buddies with their bikes, and picks up pin money by beating up or at least extorting money from homosexuals who frequent the town park and underground construction sites. Into their lives comes pretty, blonde, bosomy Fientje (Renee Soutendijk), who runs through the boys one after another, first taking Reen from his long-suffering, shy little bed-mate, Maya (Marianne Boyer), then moving on to the other lads.

So much is packed into *Spetters*, and so disjointedly, that nearly every shot at a good story evaporates in the general confusion. We have the commercialism of sports — Fientje gets a contract from "the Japs" for Reen, who'll back him and provide him with spiffy Hondas because he's obviously champion material. We have the awkwardness of youth. We have all that sex and those bodies. We have the clash of cultures between the young punks and their staid parents (Eve's father is a Calvinist autocrat who whonks the poor guy around even harder than Eve whonks the homosexuals). We have Reen paralyzed forever after a motorbike accident. We have Fientje abandoning Reen because she's not the martyr type. We have, by the end, Hans getting the girl, Reen deliberately killing himself rather than endure life in a wheelchair forever, we have everything and nothing. I don't mind giving away the ending of *Spetters* because it is obvious from the start that tragedy awaits anyone foolish enough to endure the thing.

The new Dutch film, Spetters, *is so cliché-ridden that "every shot at a good story evaporates in the general confusion."*

We have, also, the strange case of Eve. Mr. Agterberg is the brunette among the blonds. He looks a little like a young Leonard Nimoy in the "Star Trek" Mr. Spock days. Of all the characterizations in *Spetters*, Eve's is the most ridiculous and the most potentially interesting. Ridiculous, because every cliché in the book of clichés is trotted out to explain him: repressive father, tendencies to make his extra cash by bashing those he thinks he despises the most, eventual realization of his own homosexuality — this owing, if you can believe it, to being gang-raped by a bunch of homosexual hoods who've had enough of his predations — ultimately a decision to go with his tendencies while also attempting to get the better, some day, somehow, of his sour, dour old dad.

Potentially interesting, for the same reasons. While Reen is a talented guy with the bikes and the girls, and Hans is a good looking little klutz, and Fientje is a slut with a heart of gold, Eve is, in caps, Complex. He broods, he is not outwardly as obnoxious as his pals (except to the hapless homosexuals whom he follows and robs), he is clearly in some confusion about his, in caps, Identity.

But all is lost in *Spetters* because nothing is adequately realized. It's like an old Hollywood B-grade war movie where the buddies go through heck together and one is crippled, one dies, one learns a Lesson, in caps, and the other guys all swirl about our trio of pals as walk- or die-ons. Here we trade Rotterdam for the foxhole, but we're still up to our ears in the muck. The major disappointment in *Spetters*, this in a film that abounds in disappointments, is the awkward, even hideous, misuse of the tribulations of Eve. (There is, I think, no pun intended in the name: it's not unusual as a man's first name in Holland, though perhaps Verhoeven is trying to tell us something cute about Eve's sexuality.) Can you imagine, today, a serious movie attempting to show us that a young woman suddenly came to love sex because she had been mercilessly raped by four or five thugs? There is in no serious literature about homosexuality any suggestion that homosexuals suddenly "come out" when, at age 20, or thereabouts, they are sodomized by rapists. But that is what we are to believe about Eve. He becomes, I suppose, the apple of Rotterdam's gay set, but he's rotten just the same, like almost everything else in *Spetters*.

After all this, anyone in search of a purely pleasant two hours of film about homosexuals had best wait till the original *La Cage Aux Folles* comes around again in rerun. ❑

***LR*'s film critic also reviews for WNAC-TV (CBS), WRKO-AM, and *The Boston Herald American*. He hosts "The David Brudnoy Show" on radio and "Nightscene" on television, writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column, reviews books and restaurants, and lectures frequently on popular culture and politics.**
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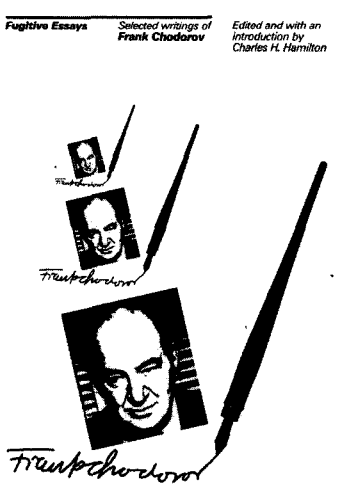
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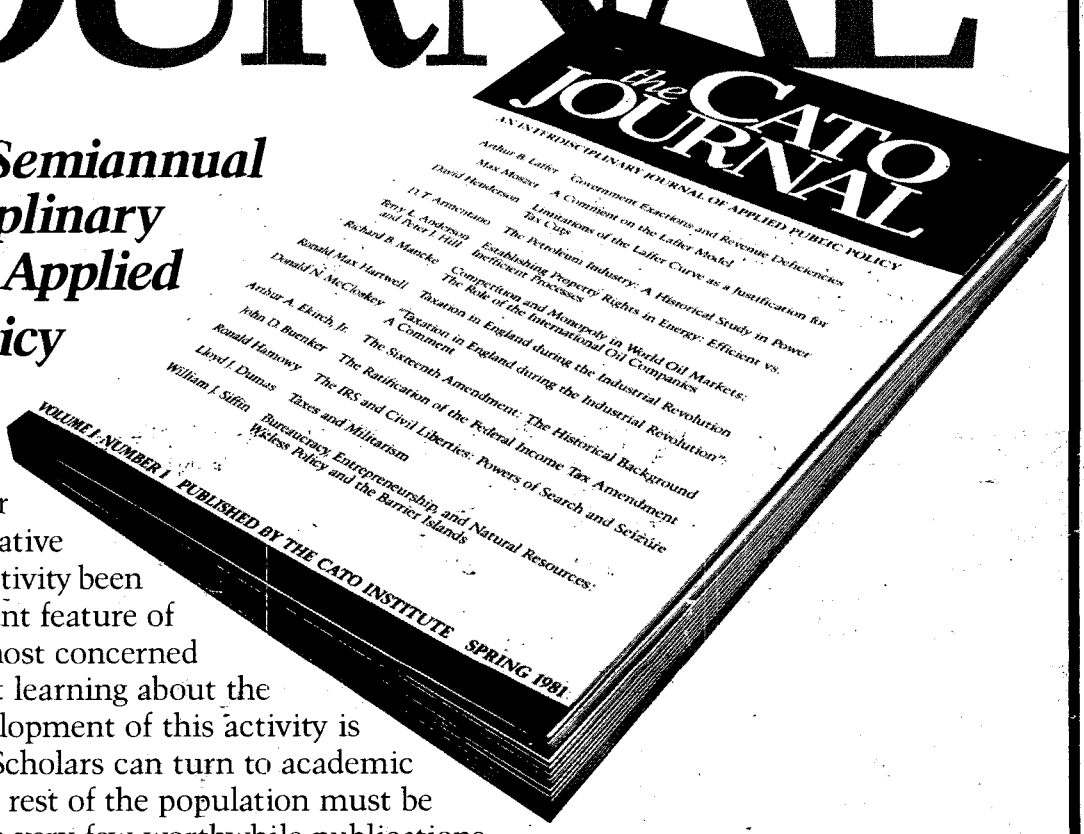
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